

THE LONDON MERCURY

Edited by J. C. SQUIRE



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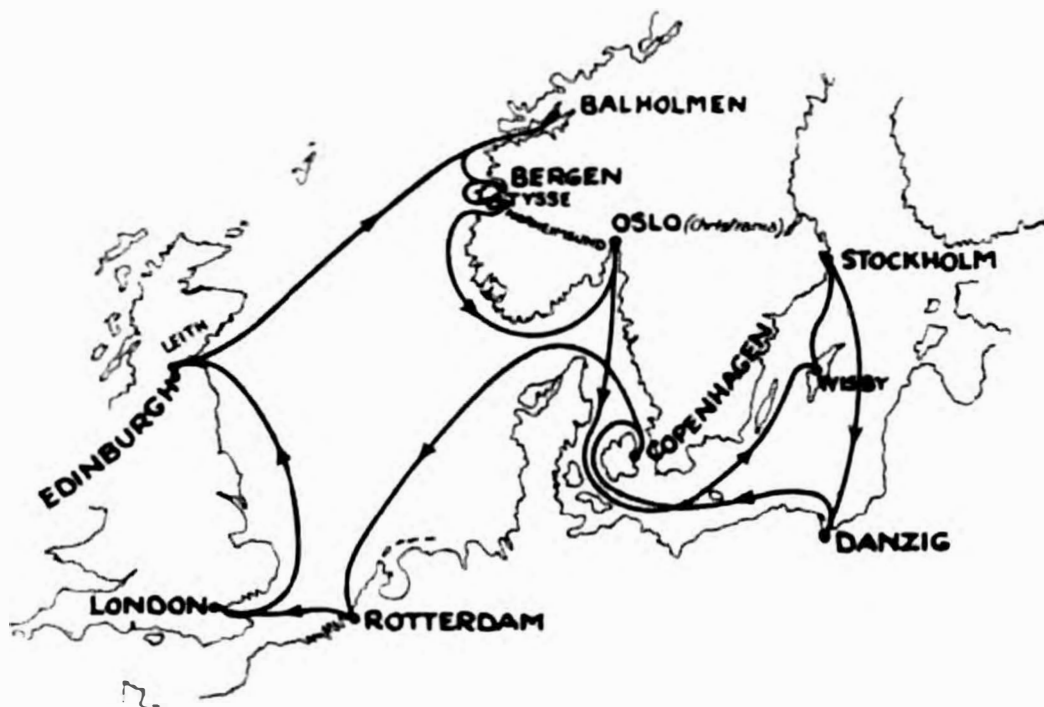
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Editor—J. C. SQUIRE

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Vol. XII No. 68

June 1925

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE memorial to W. H. Hudson in Hyde Park was opened by the Prime Minister on May 19th. The ceremony was the most charming that we have ever attended. It was a bright spring morning ; the Serpentine, as we went over the bridge, sparkled in a light breeze ; the trees in the Park wore their new green ; and the dense shrubberies were sprinkled with the blossoms of lilac and pink hawthorn. A side path off the main western road across the Park led to the Bird Sanctuary, a thickly wooded reserve surrounded by a railing and climbing to what our grandfathers used to call " a gentle eminence." In the middle of the south edge of the reserve there is a grassy space, encircled at the back by dense wood. At the back of this, veiled, was the monument ; in front of the monument a long shallow rectangular stone bath for birds, its margin level with the ground ; then a patch of turf ; and then, next the railings, a precisely similar bath. (We remember that at the original memorial meeting several enthusiasts suggested a drinking fountain for birds, and that Lord Grey modestly pointed out that, if the birds were really thirsty, they might refresh themselves in the Serpentine, but that a shallow bath might be appreciated.) A considerable, but not enormous, crowd, mostly seated on chairs, was gathered around an improvised platform under the trees ; a crowd mainly composed of literary persons, bird-lovers, and people from that world where fashion, politics and the arts dwell together in amity, but pleasantly sprinkled with casual passers-by, nursemaids and park idlers. Almost concealed in the bushes, a little orchestra, conducted by an invisible Sir Hugh Allen, deliciously discoursed Arcadian music on pipes, music for the faithful or the sad shepherdess.

THERE were but two speeches. First, Mr. Cunninghame-Graham, with splendid eloquence but perhaps an exaggerated view of Hudson's status as a writer, talked of prose and the Pampas. Then Mr. Baldwin spoke, with that captivating straightforwardness and sincerity, that humour, that unaffected polish, and that rare union of commonsense and poetical feeling, which make his speeches unique amongst the speeches of statesmen. Though some at least of his remarks were obviously impromptu, he was never at a loss for the right word, for grammar and for cadence. His observations on Hudson's qualities were in excellent proportion and could only have been made by a naturally sound critic with a wide background of reading ; and, characteristically and without demonstration, he selected for quotation just the one passage from *Far Away and Long Ago* in which Hudson rose to his highest, being normally a man who kept on a high level but did not soar. When Mr. Baldwin lovingly strung off the beautiful names of a number of English villages, with a side reference to the creative power of an age which had no cheap literature, and no popular press, he reminded us of Edward Thomas. It was a perfect speech. He concluded it, all too soon for most of us ; he then led a little procession inside the railings ; and then the veil was lifted off the monument.



THE pie was opened ; and if the birds did not begin to sing, at least the reporters did. A few seconds were occupied in quietness by a taking-in of the general effect ; then all eyes were concentrated upon the panel ; then a hum began, which grew into a buzz, which grew into a roar, as excited men rushed about catechising all and sundry about Mr. Epstein's panel. All the conversations it is impossible to record ; here is one which summarises several :

" What do you think of it, Mr. Squire ? "

" I like it."

" But Sir Herbert Dunk has just said he thinks it awful."

" What the devil's that to do with me ? "

" What do you like in it ? "

" I like the thing as a whole."

" Do you mean that you like the shape of Rema ? "

" If you mean, would I like my wife to be that shape, certainly not."

" But don't you think it's ugly ? "

" If you took the panel as a separate piece of sculpture I shouldn't be very fond of it. Epstein is a very powerful sculptor and he knows what he's up to ; but his tastes are a bit Babylonian for me, and I think distortion is very often carried too far."

" May we say that you think the panel ugly and a libel on Rema in *Green Mansions* ? "

" No ; most certainly not. What is it to do with Rema ? Epstein's job was not to make an idealised portrait of Rema which might have fought the general lay-out. The memorial is the whole thing : baths, turf, background, and massive

white stone. Epstein's job was merely to make certain marks on a small portion of the stone which would not interfere with the whole thing. He might have made, perhaps, marks more charming in themselves ; but he is a born architectural sculptor with a feeling for mass and setting, his panel is really undemonstrative, a low level relief ; he had to conventionalise to get his effect ; and if we don't all like his mode of convention let us at least be thankful that he has not entered into competition with Mr. Pearson, the architect, but has realised that his chief business was to break the uniformity of the stone with a pattern and not to concentrate attention on his own figure, the general conception of the monument being primarily architectural and not sculptural."

" Oh. . . . Do you think the birds will ever come here ? "

" I don't know. There seem to be a lot of cuckoos here this morning, and several parrots."

" Good morning ; thank you very much."

" Good morning ; the pleasure was mine."

This is the sort of conversation that kept the crowd hanging round the Bird Sanctuary for an hour after the official proceedings were over.



AND, afterwards, what a rumpus ! Almost all the papers in London have been on the Epstein trail. Day after day " Civis " and " Pro Bono Publico " have been writing their indignant letters, demanding that the memorial should be pulled down or broken up with hammers at dead of night ; and day after day the embattled journalists of London have protested that such monstrosities cannot be tolerated and that there should be no memorials in public parks. That the public opinion on this particular memorial has been fairly represented we do not believe. We have reasons. We ourselves were " interviewed " over the telephone by the representative of a popular daily. He began by saying that the Epstein panel was abominable, and that we no doubt thought so. We replied by saying that we did not think it abominable. He then asked what we did think. We told him, with as reasoned a defence of the panel as could be got over the telephone. He then said that several letters had come into the office saying that the memorial was disgusting ; would we not say it was disgusting ? We repeated emphatically that we would not ; to yet another plea we answered in a similar strain, asking that if we were reported at all we should be represented as defenders of the memorial. This was promised. What was the result ? We were not reported at all. Various opinions were printed, that were adverse to the memorial ; our own, as it was not adverse, was not printed. It is, alas, characteristic of the modern Press. It will make a stunt of a work of art when it can be abused effectively ; but defence does not appeal to it. It will " go for " the work of a genuine artist if it has unpopular points, but it will never demand the destruction of the loathsome statues that defile street and park all over London. It chiefly betrays its interest in art when it has an opportunity of attacking the work of an artist : then all, both the Philistines and the Cannibal Highbrows who devour their own kind, are hot on the trail.

WE have mentioned above one line of defence : the first and most important. The memorial should be looked at as a whole, and we should think of what it will look like when it has weathered a little. But there is a case for the panel in itself, leaving out of the question its relations with its setting. We are not amongst those who think that the spirit of it is not akin to Hudson's ; Hudson was not a mere pretty writer about twittering songsters, but a man who had faced nature " red in tooth and claw." Mr. Epstein's carving, straight and true, is well composed. There are details that might be criticised in it ; but it has a spirit, and a spirit not alien to Hudson's.



A GENTLEMAN in the *Times* correspondence columns says that Rema's hands are like soup-plates ; he simply hasn't grasped the fact that this is a composition subordinated to a general design and aimed at representing a particular spirit. Mr. Epstein has had the same sort of trouble all along. He never comes really into the public eye except when there is a row in the press about him, when the press is given a chance of using him as a stick with which to beat all artists who do not serve up pretty confections which will please the picture-postcard public. There was a row about his Wilde monument ; there was a row (and a comprehensible one) about his powerful but repugnant " Christ " ; there was a row about his statues on the British Medical Association Building in the Strand. This last was especially noisy ; we were informed that until these statues were down the Strand would not be a place to which a decent Englishman would be expected to bring his daughter : the reason being that Mr. Epstein's nudes were nudes in a convention not the Greek. All things pass and this also. A month after the shindy nobody any longer took any notice of the statues ; Londoners do not look up, whether to see the indistinct details of realistic statues on a Strand second-storey or to see the geese, as they may sometimes be seen, fly high over Blackfriars Bridge. The statues blended with the building ; they were good, and the noise has ceased. We can conceive a sculptor more consonant in his taste with us than Mr. Epstein is ; but he is a genuine artist, and before they destroy his work in Hyde Park they should destroy nine-tenths of the statues in London, a disgraceful array. We imagine that within six months the dispute will have been forgotten, and that the memorial will be frequented only by splashing birds and by quiet ladies and gentlemen coming with crumbs for the birds. The critics will not be there ; but the birds may see something of Mr. Epstein, of Mr. Lionel Pearson who did the general " lay-out," and of Mr. Muirhead Bone who, as expert Committeeman, was (we believe) responsible for the scheme as a whole.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD has died at the age of sixty-eight. He began his career at the age of nineteen as secretary to Sir Henry Bulwer (a Norfolk neighbour) in Natal, and in 1877 he hoisted the British flag at Pretoria. Several years in South Africa resulted in his first book, *Cetewayo and His White Neighbours* (1882), and gave him backgrounds for most of his romances, and for his novel *Jess*, a work which at one time was very highly praised but is now rather generally overlooked. After *Dawn* and *The Witch's Head* he brought out, in 1885, *King Solomon's Mines*, a vast success, a book which appealed both to the young and to the adult, and was the precursor of a whole literature which combined the treasure-trove motif with the archæological motif. For forty years he continued to produce romances, in spite of a vast amount of work for agriculture, afforestation, and Empire Settlement. *She, Nada the Lily, The People of the Mist, Ayesha, Allan Quatermain, and Cleopatra* were the most celebrated of them: one of the latest, *Moon of Israel*, made a very successful film. Haggard fell very little short of being a first-class writer. He had some gift of character, some humour, great narrative power, an intense interest in antiquity: he was admirable in his treatment of romantic love, had a fertile imagination and approached poetry at his climaxes, particularly when writing of the soul, death and immortality. A little more precision and many of his pages might have been immortal: his writing, though musical, was the faintest shade too inexact and weak. However, it is difficult to imagine his best books entirely losing their appeal. For a full consideration of his work we commend our readers to an article by Mr. Edward Shanks in our issue of November, 1924.



MISS AMY LOWELL has died in America, just after the publication of her book on Keats, which is reviewed elsewhere in this number. She was to have visited England this spring, but ill-health compelled her to cancel the engagement. She was fifty, a member of the celebrated Boston family. When nearly forty she began a career of very active literary production, writing numerous volumes of "free verse" and what she called "polyphonic prose." Her best book, perhaps, was *Can Grande's Castle*, which is full of vivid pictures drawn from history and travel, though very kaleidoscopic in its effect. Her best-known poem was *Patterns*, which was pretty enough: too often she seemed rather to be engaged in demonstrating against real or imaginary opponents than in expressing something that she wanted to express in a manner natural to her. Her genuine enthusiasm for the art was undoubted. Because she smoked cigars, legend, in England, imputed to her an excessive masculinity. This was quite wrong: she was a short, substantially-built lady, slightly like Queen Victoria, excitable, and with a rapid high-pitched voice. Her book on Keats, with all its faults, was the fruit of an intense admiration and years of hard work.



THE death of Lord Leverhulme removes one of the most generous patrons of the arts who have ever arisen amongst our merchant princes. He always pretended that he had built Port Sunlight because it paid. No doubt it did: but that was no reason why he should have troubled himself perpetually about the æsthetic qualities of the houses there, constantly improved them, and ended by giving the community an Art

Gallery crowded with hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of pictures, statuary, furniture and china. He gave the nation Stafford House ; one of his last actions was to buy Grosvenor House in order to put it at the service of artistic enterprises. The Faculty of Arts used it for an All Arts Week last month, and it is to be hoped that it will be dedicated permanently to the purpose for which he meant it. At seventy-four he was as fresh as a young man, still rising early ; working hard, talking enthusiastically on all manner of subjects, and even dancing. He lived strenuously, and died game ; for all his eccentricities a likeable man and an admirable citizen.



MR. GEORGE WHALE, who died suddenly at an R.P.A. Dinner with words of charity on his lips, was seventy-five. He was a solicitor, and had been Mayor of Woolwich, and a Parliamentary candidate ; but he shone chiefly as a ripe reader who wrote little, but was one of the best after-dinner speakers in England. The Johnson, Pepys and Omar Khayyam Clubs were among his favourite resorts ; at these and many others he will be long remembered and long regretted.



CHARLES DICKENS' house, No. 48, Doughty Street, has been bought by the Dickens Fellowship, and will be formally opened on June 9th. What was probably Dickens' workroom has been made the library, and Mr. B. W. Matz has presented to it his collection of books of and about Dickens. The kitchen has been decorated and arranged in the old-fashioned Dingley Dell style, whilst other rooms are set apart and furnished for visitors. A Dickens dinner is being held on June 9th in the Connaught Rooms, at which several distinguished speakers will be present.



THE PORPOISE PRESS are publishing re-issues of the Scots classics, the first two volumes of which are *The Testament of Cresseid*, by Robert Henryson, at 6s., and *The Scots Poems* of Robert Fergusson, at 9s. Robert Henryson's poem is a continuation of Chaucer's tale, in no way imitative, and *The Scots Poems* are faithfully reprinted from the editions of 1773 and 1779. Both books are printed on cream mould-made paper, bound in paper boards ; the edition is limited to 500 copies, and the low price gives the ordinary book-lover an equal chance with the wealthy collector of becoming their possessor.



AN exhibition of rare old prints of nineteenth-century ships will be held at the Fulham Central Library, Fulham Road, S.W., from Saturday, May 23rd, to Saturday, June 20th inclusive. The prints are selected from the MacPherson collection as an illustration of British nineteenth-century shipping, with special reference to the transition from sail to steam. Admission is free and the hours of opening are from 1 to 8 p.m.

POETRY

TWO POEMS

To

DEAR (thus I dare), how I have longed
 To double, treble, nay to see
 Past computation bloomed and thronged
 The love of thee that raptures me :
 O were I capable to clasp
 Thee with the serene energy,
 The more than wrestling-Jacob grasp
 Wherewith souls once took hold of thee !

O rosy courage, soft resolve,
 That pinioned thee so amorous fast,—
 Thither my passions now convolve
 And yearn to whelm thee so at last.
 When shall I meet thee on the mead
 Where kingcups fawn about thy feet
 And by some ivied fountain lead
 To tell thee that I find thee sweet ?

When the stormed sky forgot its scars
 And sunset calmed to thy red smile,
 When I have watched the veil of stars
 And thought thy glance shone out awhile,
 Nay, when three golden apples hung
 In winter dusk from a dim stem,
 I knew thee ever blithe and young,
 The poet smiling over them.

And over mountains lusted clear
 If some have hailed thee, may not I ?
 In thy own crystal atmosphere
 Thy beauty will come glittering by.
 As by a sedgy brook I came
 On some great white bird unaware,
 So in the morning's lonely flame
 I'll spy thee with thy streaming hair.

THE LONDON MERCURY

Confused and gross in this my cry,
 Let me not lose thee, loving so :
 Nay, thou for once art less than I,
 I, mortal, will not let thee go.
 Or else, destroy this oak, whose bough
 Lets honied light steal in to rest
 Upon thy contemplating brow
 That calms the chaffinch in her nest.

Or else, uproot these daisies : beat
 The brook's live emerald till it's null ;
 Tear down this dancing meadowsweet,
 Make this hare's fur unbeautiful.
 What wouldst thou have, sweet spirit, who
 Hast lured me with so many a spell ?
 Thou smilest deep, thou meanest true—
 What, if not love, I cannot tell.

In a Country Churchyard

EARTH is a quicksand ; yon square tower
 Would still seem bold,
 But its bleak flinty strength each hour
 Is losing hold.

Small sound of grasping undertow
 In this green bed !
 Who shuts the gate will shut it slow,
 Here sleep the dead !

Here sleep, or slept ; here, chance, they sleep,
 Though still this soil
 As mad and clammed as shoals acreep
 Around them boil.

The earth slips down to the low brown
 Moss-eaten wall,
 Each year, and nettles and grasses drown
 Its crumbling crawl.

The dog-rose and ox-daisies on
 Time's tide come twirling,
 And bubble and die where Joy is gone—
 Sleep well, my darling.

Seldom the sexton with shrewd grin,
Near thy grave-cloth,
With withered step and mumble thin
Awakes eve's moth.

Not a farm boy will dare destroy,
Through red-toothed nettles,
The chaff-chaff's nest, and strew the shells
Like fallen petals.

The silver-hooded moth upsprings,
The silver hour,
And wanders on with happy wings
By the hush tower

That reels and whirrs and never drops,
But still is going,
For quicksand not an instant stops
Its deadly flowing.

And is Joy up and dancing there
Where deepening blue
Asks a new star ? and is her hair
There freshed with dew ?

Here O, the skull of some small wretch,
Some slaughtered jot—
Bones, white as leaf-strigs or chopped twitch—
Thus turned fate's plot.

So lies thy skull ? This earth, even this,
Like quicksand weaves.
Sleep well, my darling, though I kiss
Lime or dead leaves.

Sleep in the flux as on the breast,
In the vortex loll ;
In mid simoon, my innocence, rest,
In lightning's soul.

Bower thyself ! But, joyous eyes,
The deeps drag dull—
O morning smile and song, so lies
Thy tiny skull ?

EDMUND BLUNDEN

Ishmael

THE night you died the air was full of sighing,
 From jungle passes blew the sickening breeze,
 Across the moon a dingy smoke was flying,
 The black palms tossed and tossed the bounding seas,
 The warm gusts filled the tent where you were lying
 And swayed the lantern light across your knees,
 The crepitant crickets everywhere were crying
 Between the sighs and sudden silences.

Right well you knew, and we, that you were dying
 Self-exiled, self-disgraced, self-overthrown,
 You who had spent youth, blood and bone denying
 Blood of your blood, bone of your very bone.
 We spoke : you grinned, in iron derision eyeing
 The proffered cup. Then between groan and groan
 Forced out your last : " God damn you and your prying !
 Why can't you let . . . a bastard . . . die alone ? "

The night you died, the air was full of sighing.

ROBERT NICHOLS

Portrait

Jane W

SHE does not seem to care,
 She does not know her hair
 Is golden with an hint
 Of Trojan ashes in't.
 She does not seem to know
 How rarely dark eyes go
 With honey-coloured hairs
 Drowning the coral ears.

She does not know her worth,
 She thinks that Love is mirth,
 And laughs ; I never saw
 Beauty more free from awe.
 Yet if the Queen of Love
 Descended from above,

What could she do but choose
 Her body young and loose,
 Her calm and easy ways
 And that wide level gaze ?
 And maybe in that dress
 Add to her loveliness.

The Past was mine—but O
 With this unmelted snow
 America has caught
 The eye of all my thought :
 Helen, your foster town
 Once and for all is down,
 And now Grand Rapids race
 To take Scamander's place,
 Araby the Blest
 Loses the Phoenix nest !

And now, and now
 My song shall tell—but how ?
 Can poetry compose
 The budding of a rose,
 Or prosody out-do
 The throstle in the yew,
 Or memory make up
 For Life and love and hope ?
 Before her living word
 My singing is absurd :
 " You have my hand," she said,
 " Where shall I put my head ? "

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

The Planetoscope

"YOU have not seen her yet ? You shall to-night."—
 So saying, he led me into a darkened room.
 Along one side a massive table, quite
 Loaded with bulbs, coils, batteries, spanned the gloom
 From end to end. Along the other side,
 Masking the whole face of the wall, there dropped
 From roof to floor, the smooth fantastic slide
 Of a black mirror. Busily he hopped
 Around the table, adjusting, tuning, spurring

THE LONDON MERCURY

His gadgets to the miracle, until
Odd lights behind the glass began to thrill.

As on a summer morning, idly stirring
Your breakfast cup, you've seen the sunlight spill
And vibrate on the ceiling, and then join,
While your cup settles, into the sun's disc
Reflected from the surface of your tea :
Such was the oscillating radiancy
I saw behind that mirror throb and whisk,
Subside to a star, and merge to a constellation.

" Good," said he : " that was Sirius, here's Orion.
Now I must dodge between the Crab and Lion
Awhile : but wait ! "

At last he found his station
And watched with me. Behind the wizard glass
A pale suffusive mist began to pass,
Deepening it with a drenching lustre ; and soon
It glowed as the horizon glows at the hour
That wakes the lapwing, while the gibbous moon
Thrusts imperceptibly upward, like a flower.
But this was not the waning moon, that swum
Into the glass, with calm and austere pace ;
This was the ancient Earth ; I saw her come,
Our heavenly Pilgrim, with the blind bright face
She only bares to angel eyes, that plumb
The rushing abyss of cold sidereal space.
Like hollow alabaster around a flume,
Dazzling with silver, and deep with ebony,
Veiled here in malachite, there in filigree
Of dawn and sunset shadow, on she came :
Her movement seemed all motion to dissemble,
And very stillness seemed to make her tremble.

" Observe," he cried, " down the vague eastern verge,
America, half-withdrawn into our night,
From which the rearward Rockies just emerge,
In serried files irregular and bright
Reluctantly retreating. To the West,
Day strikes the dragon's coils before Hong Kong,
And the Himalay's glimmer, and Everest
Salutes the dawnlight on a golden gong.
And here's Japan, this opalescent haze,
And here Australia, basking in lone sea.
And curving backward from the noonday blaze
You see the Pacific unbosomed and expand
And mantle to the Globe's rotundity.

“ *Ocean of Peace ? Was't Damien ? I forget.*
 But 'this magnificent orb of sea and land
 Is now the prize of war, Discordia's apple.
 Trumpets are blowing for it, the lists are set,
 The barriers are collapsing. On either hand
 Our arrogant White and supple Asian stand,
 Eyeing each other for the final grapple.
 Yet each is wary, it may be deferred ;
 Hate's below flashpoint yet, there's nothing overt.

“ For this, I call it the Planetoscope :
 An undeveloped toy, but still, I hope. . . .
 “ And as for useful inventions, have you heard
 Of the new poison-gas they've just discovered ? ”

MATT. RICHARDSON

On a Book of Lamb's

Received as a Prize for Flowers by a Child named Algernon Charles

FLOWER of all speech made sweet his mouth, who spake
 Ever his lightsome jest and happy word—
 Even as an angel's soul in a caged bird,
 Harmonious though the heart was like to break.
 Flower of all life ennobled his to make
 Such sacrifice as was till then unheard,
 Who straightway, as a thing of course, preferred
 To thought of self his stricken sister's sake.

Think then how meet it is that you receive,
 For flowers you brought, the perfect book wherein
 That floral soul its fragrance most did leave—
 How meet, my child, that such a prize you win,
 In whose own names we flower-wise interweave
 Lamb's name and his who was so near akin !

JAMES BROADBENT MARSHALL

Ctesiphon

IN the morning, in the golden light
 Thro' the Desert Tigris stream flows red :
 And the sun by day and the clear stars at night
 Look down upon the strangers that are dead.

By Khosroes' palace was a grave before—
 Arab and Greek and Parthian is the dust,
 And near upon the 'Tigris' winding shore
 They find the Roman swords all turned to rust.

But stranger it seems that here so far away
 We leave our friends ; and they who yesterday
 Spoke to us of the English fields we know—
 Over their graves the Desert wind shall blow.

Over their graves winds of the Desert range,
 Thorn of the Wilderness about them grows :—
 But they shall know nor restlessness nor change,
 For o'er this Desert blooms the English rose.

HENRY BEEARE

October : meeting E., the Masseur

THE months perform their functions with a zest;
 Autumn's itself ; spring will be spring again ;
 And clear cloud-blustering breezes from the west
 Blow heart into the sons of Northern men.

A Swede to-day, a clear-skinned mariner,
 Braced my loose fingers with a tonic hand ;
 His boasts were innocent, his eyes were bland,
 Grey as October seas, but merrier.

But this brave sailor never set a sail ;
 Only his heart's own ship he piloted
 Through London currents ; when I hove in hail,
 He shouted greeting. Mariner, I said ?
 Why, he is one who lives by giving ease
 By body-buffeting, to the tired head,
 Salting stale blood with savour of the seas.

W. W. WINKWORTH

Spinster

ROSSES for love : I laughed and flung
 The littering petals far.
 " My heart's scarce grown enough, I'm young."
 I hooked love to a star.

He dangled stiffly there till I
 Dried like a buried bone.
 Now wind and sky together cry,
 " Alone, alone, alone."

MARION PEACOCK

To my Sub-liminal Self

HOW came we thus together ?
 Dark Spirit housed in me !
 Bound by what fatal tether
 Closer than claw to feather,
 Or flower to honey-bee ?

Thou wak'st when I am sleeping,
 Ousting me from my throne,
 My past lies in thy keeping,
 I spend long hours in reaping
 The tares that thou hast sown.

A sage that oft will blunder,
 A saint that stoops to shame,
 In all thy ways a wonder,
 Thou rendest life asunder,
 And I must bear the blame.

When I am tuned to sadness,
 Thou unabashed wilt play,
 But in thy ribald gladness
 Confusion lives, and madness
 Is never far away.

Wilt thou be standing by me,
 In Heaven's all-judging day.
 Pleading with them that try me,
 Or wilt thou then deny me,
 And go thy separate way ?

T. THORNELY

Backwater

STILL, slumbrous aisles of chiselled palms,
Betel grey-columned, plantain with wide-stretched arms ;
Glides on the stream the hyacinth ; a faint breeze sighing
Freight with the broken melody of children's cries
Under the red-flame flowerets of the goldmohur trees
 Swaying, playing ;
Toll of the old pagoda and, as murmurous bees,
The vespers of his votaries to Buddha praying.

Youth, Passion and Adventure, where be they ?
Somewhere within this Burmese Arcady
Lies young Romance laughing behind her veil ?
Where are Life's Toil and Wear, its Hopes and Fears ?
Here ring no Drama's laughs, here fall no tears
 But only dreaming, dreaming . . .
Empty the sky save for one russet sail
Set for the rainbow arching the hemispheres . . .
Yonder the World with all its millions teeming,
Glory, Ambition, Strife, Endeavour, Scheming. . . .
Was the die cast aright ?
The signpost at the cross-roads read in vain ? . . .
Across the west God paints His message bright,
Crimson and orange over the Delta plain.

C. J. RICHARDS

ON THE HIGH SEAS

By REGINALD BERKELEY

IT was a most black-hearted business," repeated the ex-Attorney-General. "I've prosecuted in some dirty cases in my time—coolie murders especially—but, of all the dastardly crimes in my experience, I give the palm to the Jansen mystery."

The cool verandah of the Ovalau Club was deserted except for our four selves—the ex-Attorney-General, the Traveller, the Journalist and me. Levuka was taking its afternoon siesta. In a couple of hours the Club would be full of men—but at three o'clock it was an ideal place for idle reminiscence.

The Traveller cocked his left eyebrow interrogatively.

"Why?" he demanded. "Inadequacy of motive?"

The ex-Attorney-General considered this, and slowly shook his head.

"No," he replied, "I should say the motive, though sordid, was, for a person of Jansen's intelligence, adequate enough. He wanted to steal the schooner. In fact it was sheer piracy. What he lacked the intelligence, or perhaps the foresight, to recognise was that it's no good stealing a sailing craft in mid-ocean, unless you can navigate her. And even had he been able to do that, his difficulties were only beginning."

The Traveller nodded comprehendingly. "The ship's papers, of course," he conceded. "He was done as soon as he touched a British port." As an afterthought he added, "He could have disposed of her to the natives of the Line Islands"; and then proceeded to ask with some animation, "But did he strike you as defective in intelligence? At the trial, for instance?"

The ex-Attorney-General shook his head again.

"No opportunity of forming an opinion," he replied. "The man gave no evidence—seemed sulky—wouldn't even plead; just shammed mad and made occasional uncouth noises. . . . You were in court, weren't you?", addressing me.

"I was on in the next case," I said, "I had a glimpse of Jansen. He struck me as being dazed—I don't know that I'd go so far as to say he looked stupid."

"He had a high broad forehead, keen blue eyes and a large decisive mouth when I last saw him," said the Traveller.

The ex-Attorney-General masked his interest behind an impassive face and half-closed eyes. "When was that?" he enquired listlessly.

"In Sydney, about ten years ago."

"Shortly before the crime, in fact."

The Traveller nodded. "The man who was murdered—the captain of the schooner—was then employed by an English firm trading in the Islands—"

"Moore and Banks, to be exact," murmured the ex-Attorney-General.

"Quite correct. Moore and Banks," the other agreed. "Bill Moore was at school with me. I stayed with him during part of my Australian trip. Used to go down to his office fairly often just to get an idea of how businesses are run in those parts. General information, you know. I was there that evening when Edwards—the captain, you remember—came in to get his final instructions."

"And sign on Jansen as supercargo," said the ex-Attorney-General.

"Precisely. That's the first time—the only time—I saw Jansen in the flesh. Big saturnine fellow. Slavonic type. But lots of intelligence. . . . You don't tell me that Jansen—the fellow I saw—committed murder to get possession of a ship which he must have known was no good to him?"

The ex-Attorney-General stiffened slightly. "As you're interested," he said, "I'll go briefly over the essential facts of the case as proved beyond all doubt by the Crown." He leaned slightly forward and told off the points on his fingers. "The schooner *Eclipse*, master Jabez Edwards, mate Charles Robins, crew of four and Abel Jansen, supercargo, left Sydney on a trading voyage bound for the Solomons, Yap, Manila and home via Thursday Island—date June 25th, 1910. On November 2nd Jansen and one of the blacks were picked up on an uninhabited atoll in the Gilbert Islands. Some natives from Butaritari, hunting for turtle, came upon them by accident, as it were. They were sent over to the Commissioner at Ocean Island, who wasn't satisfied with their story of shipwreck. To begin with they told a silly lie—gave a fictitious name to their ship. The atoll where they were found was thoroughly searched, and the stern board of the *Eclipse's* boat was discovered. When on investigation it appeared that the island in question was something like 700 miles out of the schooner's course, it looked very black; and the Commissioner sent them down to Suva to be tried in the High Commissioner's Court by the Chief Justice of Fiji. Then they changed their tack. Jansen swore they had been marooned—not in so many words because he couldn't—or rather wouldn't—speak much English; but that was the effect of it."

The Traveller held up his hand.

"Excuse me," he said, "but doesn't that show Jansen's intelligence? He knew he was out of the *Eclipse's* course, hence the lie about the name of the ship."

"Well—perhaps," said the ex-Attorney-General grudgingly. "Anyhow the strain of the police court enquiry was too much for the black, who gave the whole show away. It was a most astonishingly straightforward yarn—straightforward to the point of baldness. Everything went normally well as far as Manila. The three white men hit it off swimmingly. Then after leaving port there was a change in Jansen. And one day when they were a week out there was a terrible row. The natives, huddled together in the forecastle, heard the white men shouting the place down. And then there was a shot which was the end of the skipper. The mate dashed up on deck yelling with terror, followed by Jansen in a baresark fury, which was

astonishing because up to then Jansen and the mate had been inseparable. Indeed, the mate seems to have been a useless harmless sort of creature, a mere boy who did practically nothing except moon about the decks in fine weather, and keep the watch below when the wind got up. However, Jansen's friendship was evidently a variable quantity. For whereas the skipper was given a decent clean death with a revolver bullet, the mate had a horrible end. He threw him overboard alive in mid ocean with his own hands, the wretched lad screaming like a woman. Then he tried to take command, had a row with the crew and scuppered them all except this one fellow who caved in and offered to help. He then tried to navigate but got completely lost, piled the ship up on a reef God knows where, and got away with his accomplice in the boat. Not much intelligence about that."

The Traveller leaned forward. "If your explanation of the facts is complete, I agree," he said. "But," he added impressively, laying his hand on the other's knee, "you spoke of the mate screaming, and that reminded me: what became of the girl?"

"The girl?" repeated the other, blankly.

"The girl," replied the Traveller. "There was certainly a woman on the ship when she sailed. A Sydney barmaid—a big, sensual creature, beautiful in a savage kind of way and about as wicked as Jezebel, who spoke, however, with curious refinement. She shipped as Edwards' wife unbeknown to the firm who had a prejudice against passengers on their craft. And reasonable enough too," he added, with the traveller's contempt for the tourist, "for, taking them at large, a more empty-headed set of tomfools than the passengers on most ships you wouldn't meet if you searched the universe."

The ex-Attorney-General knitted his brows and regarded the Traveller closely.

"If what you're saying is correct," he began, "why has it never come out before?"

The Traveller nodded. "I expected that remark," he said, "perfectly natural. But it's simple enough. I'm here to-day and gone to-morrow. After the *Eclipse* left port, I stayed three more days in Sydney and then left for India. By the middle of August I was on my way overland to Thibet. I stayed nearly two years in Asia. The first time I heard of the case, except for a letter from Bill Moore giving very little information except that he had lost his schooner and there was a case coming on, was when you mentioned it to our friend here to-day," he pointed to me. "And then I couldn't be sure it was the same Jansen, until you explained a bit."

The ex-Attorney-General put his finger tips together judicially and leaned back in his chair.

"Let's have your version," he demanded.

"Willingly. For what it is worth. It is by the merest chance that I know anything. Fact is, I detest staying at so-called 'good' hotels. They're always run to catch the tourist—bound to find some of one's

fellow-passengers staying in the same hotel—a thing I can't bear. I happened to make friends with the chief engineer on the boat coming over, and he put me on to Aaron's Hotel—down by the docks. Very clean and comfortable—sailormen frequent it a lot. That's where I first saw Edwards. Also that woman. She was behind the bar, and Edwards seemed very thick with her. She was a bad one if ever there was. Loose, you know, and in with the jockeys and bookmakers—three card trick, I daresay, too. Anyhow the *Eclipse* was in port for nearly a fortnight, and by the end of the time she and Edwards got married without saying anything to anybody. I probably should never have known, but Edwards had seen me at Bill Moore's office, and so—when the wedding had come off—for fear I should let the cat out to Bill, he came up and asked me to say nothing about it. Said he'd arranged to take his wife for the honeymoon on his next cruise and the firm mustn't know anything about it. Be a sportsman, that kind of thing. Of course I said, certainly I'd say nothing about it. No affair of mine—chap on his honeymoon and so forth; and so, when he brought Jansen in to sign on that evening, he gave me a wink as much as to say: don't forget your promise, and I nodded to show I hadn't forgotten."

"Is that all?"

"Not quite. I ought to mention that there weren't many bedrooms at Aaron's Hotel—smallish place. Anyhow that girl's room was just opposite mine. I always sleep with my doors and windows wide open. More air. I must have forgotten to shut my door next morning. Anyhow standing at my dressing table, shaving, I could see, in the glass, her door the other side of the passage. There'd been a good deal of moving about going on in her room, ever since early morning, which I put down to her doing her packing—Edwards having gone aboard the night before. But whilst I was shaving, her door was opened from the inside and held ajar, as the opener stood talking to her. In the way one hears things without actually listening for them, I caught the remark—she made it—'We'll fix everything when we get out to sea'—then there was the sound of a kiss, quite unmistakable; and, just as I had made up my mind that her husband had come back after all, the door opened and out came—Jansen!"

The ex-Attorney-General pounced upon the narrator with forensic acumen.

"I thought you said you never saw him again, after the time he came to sign on," he rapped out accusingly.

The Traveller surveyed him blandly.

"I said in the flesh," he replied, "I did not actually see him in the flesh again—I saw his reflection in my looking glass."

The ex-Attorney-General had no intention of admitting that there was any possibility of an hiatus in the facts proved by the Crown. He shook his head, unconvinced.

"There is no proof that she actually boarded the ship," he objected. "She may have changed her mind about going—the firm may have got wind of the proposal before the *Eclipse* sailed and put their foot down—

she may have missed her passage. Anything may have happened to prevent her. The fact is that she was not on board when Jansen engineered this mutiny, or the black who turned King's evidence would have deposed to it at the trial."

The Traveller smiled at the other's tenacity.

"You're hard to convince," he said, "but the probability is enormous that she did go on board. She and her boxes left Aaron's that day and didn't return. . . . D'you happen to remember the name of the ship Jansen gave when they were picked up?"

"The *Hilda*."

The Traveller nodded his head gravely.

"I expected so," he said. "It just struck me. . . . Hilda was that woman's name, Hilda Bewlay—before she married, that is. . . . And so he said that was the name of his ship?"

"Not for long," replied the ex-Attorney-General. "I said before that he changed his story when they found the *Eclipse's* stern board. But it was certainly curious about that name. He was brought down to Suva in a King's ship, and shammed mad all the way. Talked a lot of rigmarole. He used to have fits of a kind, raving and shouting 'Hilda, Hilda,' and pointing through the porthole out to sea. They naturally assumed he was still trying to convince people that was the name of his ship. The native was a Tanna boy—could only talk his own lingo except for a few words of sea slang, and they got nothing out of him till they got an interpreter. Very low type of intelligence that boy—that's why the Chief Justice recommended Jansen's reprieve, I believe. The jury found the man guilty, so the Chief Justice had to pass sentence of death, but he got the Governor to commute it to penal servitude for life; and the man's still serving his time. Doctors had the fellow under observation for quite a time; couldn't make quite their minds up—one said he could find traces of insanity due to exposure; but the C.M.O. thought he was shamming. So did I. . . ."

"What was Jansen's previous history?" queried the Traveller.

"Very difficult to say. He never said a word. Moore and Banks said they shipped him as supercargo at the request and on the recommendation of Edwards. He had stipulated for a supercargo to handle the trade; and when he turned up with this 'likely looking chap' (those were Moore's exact words, 'likely looking chap,') they signed him on at £10 a month and tucker without another word. One of the curious features of the case, by the way, was that all the white men on the ship were new. Edwards had been recommended by their regular man who had shore business to attend to. His certificates were excellent, so they made no objection. The mate was taken on later in the day—apparently he was an old shipmate of Edwards. And finally Jansen."

"Did Jansen see Moore during the trial?"

"I suppose he did. Pretended not to. Part of his insane business. Looked at Moore when Moore identified him as if he'd never seen such a

person in his life before. It was Moore, by the way, who deposed to the prisoner's knowledge of English; otherwise, being a foreigner, we'd have needed an interpreter for him as well as some of the witnesses. He was a Swede according to Moore. The Swedish Consul had a go at him. Got nothing out of him; but I don't think he knew much Swedish himself. He'd been brought up in Fiji."

The Traveller leaned luxuriously back in his chair, and began filling a pipe with his eyes on the spider-haunted rafters.

"You know," he began, kindling the tobacco as he spoke, "I wouldn't be surprised if there were more in this case than meets the ear. Especially when you consider the fragment of conversation I heard at Aaron's Hotel that morning. I'm not a lawyer," he added with a touch of irony, "but I can see through a brick wall as far as the next man. I'll put up a theory that'll fit the facts as well as your piracy theory, I guess. I believe Jansen was in with that woman before her marriage—confidence trick or what not. She married Edwards to get his money—he'd saved a bit and carried it on his hooker like a sensible man. She probably intended to skip with Jansen to 'Frisco, and start in at her old Sydney game there—or perhaps they were going to have a shot at stealing the schooner and making Callao with her—adding what they got to Edwards's pile. Anyhow that's immaterial, for their precious plan never came off. Edwards was a powerful man, and I don't think he was a fool. No doubt he saw through it all. There was a row. Edwards put him over the side in an open boat. That would bear out Jansen's story of marooning."

"In that case," said the ex-Attorney-General drily, "why the black boy? And where is the ship to-day?"

"As to that," replied the Traveller, "where's the woman according to your story?"

"The man Jansen—" began the ex-Attorney-General with pontifical solemnity and paused.

The Journalist had sat throughout the entire conversation shifting his eyes from one speaker to another, slowly inhaling his pipe, but showing no other sign of life. Now he removed his pipe, and leaned forward.

"His name," he murmured, "was not Jansen."

The ex-Attorney-General figuratively staggered. He must have felt that the whole of his beliefs were being attacked.

"Nonsense," he snapped. "Moore produced the ship's articles. I've the clearest recollection. The man's name was Abel Jansen. He was a native of Stockholm."

"The man's name was not Jansen," said the stubborn journalist, "and he was a native of Memel on the Baltic. His real name was Waldemar and racially he was half a Finn and half a Lithuanian. He was, amongst other things, a political refugee, badly wanted by the police of St. Petersburg for what they used to call vaguely, 'political activities,' and for other more serious offences. The Russian authorities of those days had long arms, and so, in Australia (and especially in Woolloomoolloo where

one foreigner is as good as another) he called himself a Swede. Swede ! why the whole mercantile marine is crawling with Swedes that never saw Sweden in their lives. Any northerner's a Swede or a Dutchman . . . suited his book all right—so long as he wasn't called on to talk Swedish and Jansen's a pretty non-committal kind of handle to a man. It took in everybody well enough it seems : but it didn't take me in, because I knew his secret. Probably one of the few people outside the Headquarters of the Russian Secret Police and the Japanese Secret Service who knew anything about him at all.

" I, too, have stayed at Aaron's Hotel. I agree," he said to the Traveller, " with all you say. It's clean, comfortable, and, if you know how to go about things, quiet. . . . Waldemar, or Jansen as you call him, used to frequent the place for his meals, and other purposes, I fancy. I knew him well enough, because I ran up against him in Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese war. He was a Russian subject, but I'm morally certain he was a Japanese agent. But a war correspondent mustn't be squeamish about the sources he taps. I was out to get copy for my paper ; and in one way and another I got a lot out of Waldemar. He had a vodka shop in a back street. . . . I think he was a bit of an international republican, because as a matter of fact I'd met him before. He was connected with a society that used to meet at irregular intervals in a back room behind an unpretentious looking chemist's establishment in that big stone-flagged passage affair that runs parallel to the waterfront at Corunna. I suppose you might have called it one of the original germs of the international Communist movement—it was affiliated to a militant labour organisation at Barcelona ; and in that sense you might almost say that Waldemar, or Jansen as you call him, was the lineal ancestor of Lenin, for he was certainly the ringleader of the society. That, of course, was several years before the Russo-Japanese war."

" This," said the ex-Attorney-General judicially, taking advantage of a pause in the narrative, " is very interesting general information, but doesn't alter the fact that the man who was convicted of piracy on the high seas was Abel Jansen of Stockholm."

" I think so," replied the Journalist, " Let me amplify a little. I was in Sydney in 1910. I was sent for by the *Sydney Morning Herald* to make an investigation and write up the problem of Japanese Immigration. I stayed for a time at Petty's Hotel just to get my bearings, but it was far too obvious. The whole of Sydney knows who's staying at Petty's Hotel ; and my only chance of getting under the surface was to be an unknown wayfarer to whom people would talk freely. I chose Aaron's Hotel because it was unobtrusive and frequented by all sorts and conditions, seafaring men especially, who are the most stimulating people to talk to, as a class, that I've come across ; and also because I diagnosed it as being a good spot from which to get in touch with the Japanese Colony and find what was in their minds. Before I'd been there two days I met Waldemar and the greater part of my work was accomplished, because, knowing that he had

been a Japanese agent in the war, I knew he could tell me something about the Japanese plans, or at least put me in the way of finding them out, if only I could make him talk.

"He was standing alone by the bar when I saw him. His back was towards me ; but I don't forget people easily, and I knew him at once. It seemed a magnificent bit of luck. I knew then just how a man feels when he nets a rare butterfly, or lands a record fish. I went up, quite off-hand, and said, 'Hello, Waldemar, glad to see you.' I said it in Russian, of course, having known him last as a Russian ; and the effect was dumbfounding. He literally wilted, as if I had touched him with a poker, turned round cringing and white and with the terror of death in his face ; whimpered something. Then, recognising me, he gave a greasy smile and tried to pass it off. But first he said in broken English and in a husky whisper : would I remember that he was a Swede. Jansen. He was sure I would understand—delicate reasons and so on. It was a miracle, of course, for with the fellow in my power like that I could get anything I wanted in the way of information about the Japanese. And did ? And did ! You bet your life !"

"Did you see the woman ?" the Traveller demanded.

"I did. A big, handsome blonde with soft features and a creamy skin, who, as you say, talked with a curious refinement. She was washing glasses in that tub arrangement they have behind most bars, and setting them out to dry on the counter. As I spoke to Waldemar, she dropped a glass. I took no notice at the time, because it was the kind of accident that easily happens. But it occurred to me afterwards that it might have been the effect of my speaking Russian. I could never satisfy myself on that point. She certainly was not Australian, for all her name of Hilda Bewlay : and, though her English was perfect, it always gave me the impression of a foreigner. I tried her in Russian one day in the bar, but she made no sign at all : and when I tried to pump her in English, she replied to all my questions with that curious refinement of hers, but without disclosing anything."

"You're suggesting," said the ex-Attorney-General, "that she was in the Russian Police."

"Not by any means. The police employ all kinds of strange people as agents, without their being actually in the service. No, I guess Hilda Bewlay was just a little Russo-Polish girl anxious to get on in the world, who'd drifted to Sydney God knows how, and wasn't particular how she earned her living. I don't suppose the morality of the matter ever entered her head. The man Edwards, however, was undoubtedly a Russian. He belonged to their external secret service : and he was for every reason, professional pride, self interest, cupidity, determined to bring Waldemar, as he would have said, to justice."

"It seems," the ex-Attorney-General objected, "a far cry from the Western Pacific to Russia."

"Tell me," the Journalist replied, "in the course of the trial was there any evidence of the schooner clearing for a Russian port ?"

"She sailed from Sydney," said the ex-Attorney-General, "for Yap, Manila, and back via Thursday Island. I know of no variation of that itinerary."

"Surely," objected the Traveller, "there was a variation. I've said I heard from Moore, whilst I was in Asia. I recollect distinctly that in that letter, which recounted the loss of his schooner, there was mention of a charter—"

"Not that I remember," replied the ex-Attorney-General; but as he spoke there came into my head suddenly a picture of the spacious Supreme Court in Suva, cool under the enormous swaying punkah: the jalousies half closed, showing through the slats a white strip of coral road, palms, hibiscus and red-roofed wooden houses, all shimmering and quivering in the midday heat: the Chief Justice leaning back, with his face half turned away, but regarding the prisoner quizzically: the four assessors—an old grey-bearded planter; a smart-looking storekeeper; a shipwright; and a weather-beaten ex-sea-captain, all in their varying capacities: and the prisoner in the dock, just behind me (where I sat at Counsel's table, waiting for my case to be called), regarding the whole proceeding with a stoical indifference. It was during the examination of the Kanaka witness. He was being pressed by the Crown to give some kind of idea as to where the ship was going at the time of the shooting. And, suddenly in the midst of it all, the man in the dock behind me said something. It ripped out from between his lips, as if it were involuntary. I only caught the end, which sounded like Bostock. I was, I think, the only person who heard it. I looked round quickly and said "Yes?" but he only shook his head. I drew his advocate's attention to the incident; and he got up and spoke to the prisoner, but nothing came of it. The man had relapsed into stupidity again. . . . Suddenly now, so many years after, it dawned on me that he had said "Vladivostock."

"Ah," said the ex-Attorney-General, when I had told of the incident. "Now that you mention the name, I remember that Moore had received a telegram from Manila offering a charter to Vladivostock; but he wired back refusing, because he wanted the ship."

"That," said the Journalist, "is the missing word of the puzzle. That is the key that unlocks the mystery and makes all things plain . . . Can't you see how it all fell out, and why Jansen, or Waldemar, broke out into his baresark rage?"

"They had found him in Sydney—or rather Edwards had found him, and had marked him down with the woman. The trouble was to get him away without breaking the law and running unnecessary risks; but the Russian Secret Service can be infinitely patient, and its arm stretches over all the world—or rather that was so in the pre-revolutionary times. Waldemar would be a *persona grata* now, no doubt.

"The obvious solution was to use the woman as a decoy. She was set to entangle him and bind him to her, as only a Polish woman can, if she wishes. Then they hatched this plot of marriage. A mere façade of course,

designed to impose on Waldemar. A bogus ceremony. She doubtless explained it to Waldemar as an economic necessity : and he not being squeamish and quite ready, as you suggested," he nodded towards the Traveller, "to participate in the spoils of robbery from one whom he believed to be her husband and the captain of the schooner, acquiesced readily enough, in her apparent plan : and that accounts for the words you overheard about fixing everything on board : and that also is why, as far as Manila, everything went smoothly.

"But from the moment they left Manila, or rather from the moment he discovered, Heaven knows how, the destination of the schooner, everything was altered. . . . You talked just now of the ship being out of her course. She was indeed, in the sense that she was off the course originally set for her by her owners ; but from Waldemar's point of view she was grimly and terribly on her course. She was on her course from safety to, at the best, Siberia and at the worst— . . . She was on her course for Vladivostock, and a fat wad of roubles for Edwards and the woman : and the new supercargo, if he only knew it, was waiting for the day when the Captain would pick a quarrel, put him in irons for insubordination, and keep him so, until they made port.

"It was so easy to arrange. From Manila the Captain sent that cable about a charter to Vladivostock. It didn't make any difference that Moore wired back refusing. He could explain that away afterwards. Meanwhile there was the charter. . . . Don't you see what the charter was ? In brief, it was a charter to deliver up the body of one Waldemar, spy and political adventurer. The charter money would have been duly paid in Vladivostock, and nothing to show what had been done. The supercargo, in irons for 'insubordination,' but really in order that he might not jump overboard when he discovered his destination would be 'recognised'—to the immense astonishment of the Captain—by the Russian officials that came aboard to give *pratique*. He would be arrested, on landing, to be tried for his offence of mutiny, and taken away. Finis. I've little doubt but that the Captain intended to resign his post and hand over to another Captain, sending back the charter money all above board to the owners, and disappearing with the woman, with their own share of the swag, via the Trans-Siberian Railway. The only thing necessary was to shackle Waldemar, and that in view of his enormous physique needed some arrangement. I daresay Delilah wasn't to be any more backward in this instance, than in the case of Samson. . . . But I'd give something to know what put their plans awry. Something that happened within a week of their leaving Manila—something that led to the terrifying quarrel between the white men that sent the natives all sick and shivering into their forecastle, until that revolver of Jansen's—Waldemar's—blew out the brains of the Russian agent ; and the great scheme, with so many roubles reward at the end of it, was wrecked for ever——"

"Even so," said the ex-Attorney-General, mildly, for him, "I don't see how you explain the absence of the woman."

“That,” replied the Journalist, “is the easiest thing to explain of all. You say the Kanaka witness described how the mate fled on deck and was flung overboard, screaming like a woman. That was not surprising. As I read the story it was only natural ; for the mate was a woman, the woman called Hilda Bewlay in Aaron’s Hotel, the woman I suspect to have been a Russian-Pole anxious to get on in the world and not particular how she did so. And he threw her living into the mid ocean, because there are some depths of wickedness and bad faith that revolt even a spy like Waldemar, who, I am convinced, was a thoroughly bad man. He felt, let us suppose, that it would be barbarous to shed the blood of the woman he had so lately cherished : but he was pardonably unwilling to leave her unpunished, to do to some other man what she had done to him. And so, reluctant to slay her with his own hands, he put her into the way of death, leaving the moment and the actual pang to her Maker . . . ”

The ex-Attorney-General yawned. “A picturesque yarn,” he said approvingly. “Your theory is, I suppose, that the woman disguised herself as mate because the firm objected to passengers, and also to draw the extra money. Ingenious. Distinctly ingenious. . . . However, the man has been found to be Abel Jansen of Stockholm by a Court of Law, and has been convicted of piracy on the High Seas : and, for all human purposes, there the matter remains and ends.”

CONCERNING KANDI

By R. D. HEMINGWAY

MR. COMMISSIONER DODDS ought to tell this story—"Can't-stop" Dodds, if you are intimate with West African affairs.

At all events, Dodds—and, in a lesser degree, Stephen, my native lay-reader—must shoulder the responsibility for what, on my part, does not pretend to be anything but a reconstruction of hearsay, linked up with legend from an English village and facts from my own African experience: the whole polished (if you like) with a trifle of literary licence.

You see, as Head of the Kiula Mission Factory School, and a parson to boot, I have good reason to cherish a reputation for truth.

So much, then, for preliminary palaver. Now let me introduce Kandi.

Kandi was black—black as the blackest of the descendants of Ham, the unfilial. Lolo, Kandi's mother, comparatively speaking, might almost have been termed white; moreover, her eyes were blue!

In the West African tribe which Lolo adorned, this strange fairness of skin and blueness of eye had appeared at intervals time out of mind: they were regarded as marks of supernatural favour, to be held in reverence and awe. I, myself, prefer to believe that the lady was a "throw-back" to a white ancestor. But let my tale explain.

Lolo held the questionable office of High Priestess to her tribe. She was not a nice person. Kandi, her son, had privileges; and, according to custom, during his boyhood, in blissful ignorance, Kandi led the life of the fatted calf. But he was no fool; for, on the eve of his fourteenth birthday—which fell at full of the moon—having put two and two together and realised that on the morrow he was destined to become the central figure of certain sacrificial rites, Kandi fled by night through the dense forest greenery toward the big river.

He turned up at Kiula in a dug-out canoe, and, claiming protection in the Mission School, soon became fluent in the singing of the hymns. But after six months' respite in this peaceful harbourage, one evening, as Kandi was walking alone along a forest track, lo and behold! one, O'bo'lo, a priestly aspirant and understudy of Lolo, stood suddenly before him.

"Kandi, my bonny lad," said O'bo'lo, in effect; "you are wanted back home for a trifle of omission."

Kandi's reply took the form of a stout stake thrust hard into the pit of O'bo'lo's stomach; whereupon Lolo's emissary forgot his errand and, indeed, all else. Kandi jumped upon his prostrate tribesman several times in derision; then, deceiving himself that the affair was closed, he strolled homeward to the Mission compound.

Nevertheless, on reflection, ugly doubts of his own thoroughness did enter within Kandi's thick skull ; and that same evening, in the brief interval between sunset and moonrise, he stole what edibles he could carry from the Mission store-room, and, borrowing a dug-out canoe, vanished quietly into the night upon the broad bosom of the great river. In course of time, he might have been recognised shovelling coals, not a whit blacker than himself, first in the bunkers of a small coastal steamer trading up and down the twin Bights of Benin and Biafra, then, urged on possibly by recurrences of those ugly doubts, as a reprehensibly fluent member of the " black-squad " aboard the ocean wanderer SS. *Bassam*.

Eventually, at dusk of a warm June evening, you are to picture Kandi, out of a job but sadly in liquor, leaning drowsily upon an upturned cargo basket in Cardiff docks. A steamer was hauling in slowly to her berth against the quay nearby ; and, as the vessel bumped against the fenders, Kandi's idle gaze took in a face, black as his own, and full of an evil, jeering triumph, just visible over the steamer's bulwarks.

It was the face of O'bo'lo.

Instantly the big demon of Fear vanquished the lesser, liquorous spirit which had previously been lulling Kandi to drowsiness. Away up the quay he fled at top speed.

Equally strenuous were his subsequent movements. Cardiff and O'bo'lo behind him, Kandi made forced marches, taking haphazard any road or by-lane that presented itself. But he felt, somehow, that it was all useless ; for he had an odd, rebellious sensation, which indeed had often puzzled him, of not being master of his own destiny.

At all events, destiny or chance guided him to Ardelay, a little village which hangs upon a hillside where the forest of Wyre pours itself over the borders of Worcestershire into Salop.

Into Ardelay one evening, just as twilight fell, swung Kandi with flat-footed gait ; and at first it seemed to the villagers who espied him that the strange nigger intended to pass on without stopping. But suddenly, half way down the one straggling street, opposite the " Little Black Man " Inn, kept by old John Shimason, Kandi pulled up short, and stood staring in amaze at the inn " Sign "—an exceedingly grotesque, nude mannikin with crossed arms, carved in wood and painted black, and about twenty inches in height, which was perched upon the front ledge of the wide portico above the inn door.

After he had stared for several moments with eyeballs rolling, Kandi broke into a capering dance, singing softly the while in an unintelligible jargon. His voice slurred from the lowest pitch to the highest, and down again, like a jews-harp.

The unemotional onlookers regarded his song and antics merely as the prelude to the passing round of the hat ; but, presently, Kandi pranced across the road and into the inn. What happened within is not recorded. Oddly enough—as afterwards it came out at the inquest—at the time there was no customer in the tap-room. It is certain, however, that Kandi

speedily re-appeared in the street, ejected upon the toe of the surly landlord's boot. Whereupon, the wandering "artiste" made haste to shake the dust of Ardelay from beneath his flat soles.

But a little after midnight, when all was dark and still, silent as a shadow, Kandi returned and came again to the inn.

Nimbly he climbed the portico, and, kneeling upon the trough-like roof behind the mannikin, crooked his head outward, peering intently at its large eyeballs. He could not understand why they were painted black and white, because he had an obstinate conviction that they ought to have been blue—blue, even as the eyes of John Shimason, the landlord of the inn; or of fair Lolo, his own mother; or of that other little figure, the twin-image of this one, which, he remembered, lurked within a fetish hut deep in the forest where he was born.

While puzzling, Kandi became aware of the *pad-pad* of stealthy footsteps. He lay down, and peeped over the edge of the portico. His sight was not that of civilised man who must lighten his way with lamps; and soon he had no doubt who it was coming softly toward him down the quiet, dark village street. But, now, Kandi had no fear. He lowered his head.

"Ho-hé, O'bo'lo!" he whispered presently.

O'bo'lo stopped, looking upward. His eyes also were night eyes; and he saw the little black figure quite plainly. Like Kandi before him, he, too, stood stock-still in amaze; he, too, had a vision of that other little figure in the forest, with its eyes of blue stone, which awaited a sacrifice long overdue.

And, as he stared at the mannikin upon the portico—(*surely it had breathed his name!*)—O'bo'lo forgot Kandi; for here was big *Oj-je*—which is witchcraft.

"Ho-hé, O'bo'lo!" murmured Kandi, in his own sing-song tongue. "Great honour awaits thee. Come thou, and take me; for I am weary and home-sick for mine own people and the forest."

O'bo'lo came quickly and silently, climbing nimbly, as Kandi had done before him; and even as his head and shoulders bent inward over the edge of the portico, he perceived the greatness of the honour that awaited him. For human pincers gripped his throat, and held him powerless, dumb, staring into the eyes of Kandi.

"Ho-hé, O'bo'lo!" jeered Kandi, singing softly, "Ho-hé, thou dog! *Thou* wouldst rob me of the great honour? Hé, O'bo'lo!—but when thou art gone, I, Kandi, will take *It* to the forest again; and the great honour shall be mine."

O'bo'lo made no answer; but a singularly evil grin overspread his distorted features. . . .

Cautiously Kandi dragged in the body over the ledge. . . .

The wooden stay supporting the little black image snapped suddenly while he strove to loosen it; and Kandi crouched backward low against the house, fearful because of the noise. Almost immediately, close above

him a window opened, and old John Shimason leaned far out, peering into the night.

Two dark, practised hands shot upward. . . .

* * * * *

Four years after he had disappeared from the Mission School, Kandi turned up a second time at Kiula, this time bound from the coast to a destination further up-river.

Myself he sedulously avoided ; but during his two-day visitation I caught occasional glimpses of him, a fully-grown, hefty-looking fellow, either furtively hanging around the Mission compound or the centre of an excited group which dispersed guiltily as I approached—up to no good, I felt sure.

Indeed, I found this out speedily enough ; for, heralded by an outbreak amongst my boys of the choicest “ Billingsgate ” for an appreciable time after Kandi had once again departed, I experienced nothing but trouble in the Mission School—not the periodical see-saw backsliding of the native convert, but a threatened stampede.

I was to understand, if you please, that my *Oj-je* was “ no fit ”—discredited, ousted, by a much stronger witchcraft recently come to town ; and finally, my native lay-reader, Stephen, who had shown signs of becoming as big a fool as any of them, owlshly informed me that Kandi was the honoured bearer to his tribe of an ineffable *Something* which had been missing from their precious fetish-hut since time immemorial.

Oh, yes, it was a most circumstantial rigmarole.

It was at this point that Dodds came thrusting up to Kiula with a detachment of native police, on his way to quell the more serious disturbances which had broken out in Kandi's wake.

In the vast hurry usual with him on an expedition of this sort, Dodds would not even step ashore, but haled me down to the Factory wharf with screeches of the launch's whistle. He listened impatiently to what information I had to give him ; demanded Stephen's presence ; bullied him, like a K.C. with a lying witness ; then, with comically wrinkled brow and an explosive “ Can't stop ! ”—off he went again full speed up river.

A week later, just as I was letting fall my mosquito curtains, shrill whistlings announced the return of the Commissioner's steam-launch. Slipping on a jacket, I lighted a hurricane lantern, and was on the point of stepping out for the wharf when Dodds himself, carrying a small bundle in a native mat, walked quickly but unevenly up the path toward the house. I suspected that he had fever as soon as I noticed how he was muffled up in a great-coat on so hot a night ; indeed, his first remark was a confession of the fact, as he subsided into a long chair upon the verandah, with the bundle nursed across his knees.

No, he didn't want any "chop"; wouldn't go to bed; but if I could manage a cup of hot coffee . . . couldn't stop for longer than that, you know. . . .

Of course, I routed out my house-boy, and ordered him to make coffee; then I returned to the verandah.

"I say, padre," Dodds began at once, "remember that yarn your feller, Stephen, sprang on us?"

I remarked that I had strong reason to remember, but Dodds evidently could not spare the time to listen.

"Well," he interrupted, "I've got another one for you now. That's what I've looked you up for. Rotten, this fever, so soon after getting back from Home," he went on with quick, staccato utterance. "Spent most of my leave near a little place called Ardelay—one-horse show, borders of Wales—my governor's Lord of the Manor, and all that sort of thing. Anyway, take it proved that Ardelay's in the piece all right. Only boasts one pub—old pack-horse Inn, past-its-day affair—with an odd sort of Sign stuck above the portico—been there since Elizabeth, so they say. Supposed to have been brought to Ardelay by a buccaneer who'd been marooned in these parts, but afterwards picked up by a Portuguese vessel and brought home. Can't vouch for that, of course.

At all events, the pub at Ardelay has been kept by Shimasons for generations. Black hair and staring blue eyes, father to son, every one of them, they say. Shimason—Shipman's son—John the Shipman. Got it?—Take it proved, anyway, for that's how the family runs back on the Court Rolls of Ardelay Manor. Back to the buccaneer, p'raps. Very well, then; while I was at home we were treated to an interesting double inquest. Mutual strangulation across a window-sill—dirty work in the small hours sort of affair. This was the way of it:—

"Old John Shimason had kicked a stray nigger out of his pub; and, not liking it, the nigger had come back at night and wrung his neck. But, before dying, old man Shimason had managed to get level.

"Seemed obvious enough. There was the innkeeper in his nightshirt lying dead beneath his bedroom window *inside*; and *outside*, a couple of feet below the same window, there was the black feller lying dead on the hollow top of the portico over the front door. Both strangled.

"Murder and justifiable homicide—the Coroner gave them the straight tip, and the rustic jury were quite content to leave it at that, and, since there was no widow, to draw their shillings. But what they—and all Ardelay, for that matter—did jib at was: what had become of the old Sign from the top of the pub portico? Just vanished. And that's the last thing you can take proved. But I wonder which of these Ardelay would recognise—"

Dodds stopped short, then added shakenly:—

"I say, p-padre, think you can g-inger up that boy of yours?"

From the sudden alteration in Dodds' voice I guessed what was coming, and clapped my hands, then shouted for my boy; but getting no reply, I sprang up and hurried toward the kitchen. It was deserted; and, oddly

enough, a freshly opened tin of *café-au-lait* and a kettle cheerfully coming to the boil upon a spirit-stove only put an edge to a ridiculous impression that my house-boy had fled in a fright. However, I set to work, brewed hot coffee, and hastened back with it to Dodds.

Even before I emerged upon the verandah I could hear his teeth rattling like castanets ; and, presently, in the light of the lantern, which I had previously hung upon a hook, I saw him sitting bolt upright in his chair, apparently dandling upon his knee two of the most repulsive little idols that ever insulted the human form. They were precisely alike, except that one had eyes made of bright blue stones. Dodds' fantastic jigging was uncontrollable—perhaps you know how fever and ague can make a marionette of a man.

“ Which of th-these Ardelay w-would re-co-cognise as their pub's Sign,” Dodds stuttered out, as I approached. “ They chop-chopped Kandi—s-sacrificed the p-poor devil, after all—l-long mem-mem'ries—fi-fixed ideas in that tribe, p-padre— ” then the twin things slipped from his knee, and he collapsed backward in his chair. You see, Dodds meant to finish his story in style.

Well, there wasn't much “ Can't stop ! ” about Dodds now ; and after I had poured a pint or so of scalding coffee into him, I tucked him up in bed beneath a pile of blankets.

He slept eventually ; and I made the trip down to his launch, aboard which, after explaining to the Senegalese captain (a Mohammedan, by the way) that he could damp down his fires, I inconsistently did a little stoking on my own account. And, you may take it proved (as Dodds says), I made sure that what I shoved into the furnaces was utterly consumed. Being a parson, I owed that much to my own *Oj-je*.

In the morning Dodds awoke free from fever but limp as the proverbial wrung-out handkerchief. Nevertheless, he was uppish enough to insist on leaving, so I gave him my arm down to the launch. Half-way he halted.

“ Dash it, padre ! ” he exclaimed peevishly. “ I've forgotten my pair of little black *ju-jus*.”

“ What pair of little black *ju-jus* ? ” I inquired, assuming a mystified air.

“ You know very well what I mean,” he rapped out ; and for a moment I thought I was going to have trouble with Mr. Commissioner Dodds.

“ My dear Dodds,” I remarked soothingly, “ I assure you that if your precious *ju-jus* are not a figment of your fever, they are most certainly exorcised by now in the furnace of your launch.”

“ Dammit, padre ! ” he exploded, “ those eyes were sapphires ! ”

“ Sapphires ?—Fudge ! ” I retorted. “ Glass, my friend.”

Dodds shrugged his shoulders and grinned.

“ Oh, all right ! But I'll see that Ardelay sends you the bill for a new Sign on their pub—and, anyway, I can't stop.”

And that is all the thanks I received from Dodds.

THE VAN ZANT DINNER

By SANDRA ALEXANDER

AS well as I knew Harrison Evans, and my knowledge of him was a matter of years and not months, I rarely had occasion to talk with him. We were fortunate enough to publish all of his novels and a book of his plays, but my position at the tail end of our firm's signature gave the intimacy of his acquaintanceship to my father and elder brother rather than to me. This was my ill luck until I chanced to cross to England with him in February, where he was to attend the London *première* of his new play, and I to patch up an unhappy mess with our English representatives. We met daily in the ship's smoking-room.

To this day I do not believe the Van Zants exist, or ever existed, for that matter, outside of the mind of that intelligent weaver of tales who sat opposite me at the little table in that smoke-wreathed room. I do not know how the story started. Perhaps the Scotch furnished the introduction ; it was old and mellow enough to have done so. But Evans was fairly launched before I had oriented myself.

"When I first fell heir to the card," he was saying, "fifteen years ago, my wife told me that her mother had been at a finishing school with the Van Zants' daughter. Like the children of a certain English king, this girl had the misfortune to drown while crossing the English Channel. The Van Zants took it very hard. They seldom enough went out before, but after that they were never known to appear at a social function of any sort. They simply retired from the world, and their infrequent visitors came in response to a royal summons. In our case the royal summons was in the shape of an invitation to dinner—sent two weeks in advance. It was engraved upon thick, creamy pasteboard and it read, as nearly as I remember,—I still have some of those cards,—'Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Tuyle Van Zant request the pleasure of'—blank space filled in by the hand of Mr Van Zant's octogenarian secretary—'Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Evans' company at dinner on the evening,'—another blank space,—and then the hour—'eight o'clock'—engraving once more. Mark that—the hour was engraved, proving conclusively that Mr. and Mrs. Van Zant attached enough importance to their dinner-hour to have it cast once and for all into imperishable copper-plate.

"My wife assured me that I would hate it. She said she used to pray for a touch of influenza whenever she fished the card out of the letter-box. It had been coming to them once a year, in the season between Christmas and Lent, ever since she could remember. Her mother invariably hired a cab, and they drove up in state, while she rebelled all the way. She objected to going and she objected to the price of the cab. She wound up by telling me that we'd have to go and carry on the tradition.

"She did me grave injustice. I hadn't the slightest intention of staying away. The yearly invitation seemed to me a touch of pretty sentiment. I fairly visualised the delightful old couple and their kindness of heart that led them year after year to do this gracious act, first to the friend of their dead daughter and her child, and then to the impecunious and struggling young literary man the child had married. I remember, as the day grew nearer, I seriously considered renting dress clothes, but my wife dissuaded me. It seemed the dinner in the past had meant extra expense and doing without something that she really wanted, and she didn't propose it should any longer. To my suggestion that we take a cab she likewise turned a deaf ear. We could go on the street car."

Evans stopped, and sipped his high-ball, his eyes twinkling at me across the table.

"The car crept uptown by way of Madison Avenue," he went on after a moment. "We planned to disembark at the cross street nearest the Van Zant house on Park Avenue and walk the rest of the way. House"—Evans paused again reflectively—"house doesn't seem quite the right word to apply to the structure that sheltered my wife's old friends. The brown stone pile appeared to me to be somewhat smaller than the Museum of Natural History, yet at the same time it presented all the cordiality of that public building. It stood behind a breast-high stone wall, and we entered through a pair of handsome pierced iron gates. The windows—literally, there seemed to be hundreds of them—were shrouded in layers of lace and emitted a faint illumination. The front doors were multiple. An ancient butler saw us safely through them into the main hall, and a powdered footman took my overcoat and derby hat. An elderly maid came to lead Nancy back to some hidden dressing-room."

II

"I examined the hall with some interest. I was to become very familiar with it in time. Decorators had already begun to go in for white-and-black marble tile foyers, Mr. Aubrey Beardsley's drawings, and Chinese brocades; but the Van Zants, it was plain to be seen, were still in the period of Mr. Charles Dickens. The panelling was carved black walnut and reached to the ceiling; velvet hung festooned at windows and doorways. To the right were heavy folding-doors, and opposite a mammoth mottled marble mantelpiece. Over this tremendous ornament of the eighteen eighties branched a pair of elk horns. The floor was covered to the base-board with wine-coloured velvet carpet, and it, in turn, was strewn with Oriental rugs. I was studying them with rapture when Nancy returned, and the butler led us to the drawing-room door. He opened it and announced our names in a voice that died away before it reached the little group at the end of it."

"As we started down the length of that enormous double room, it began to dawn upon me what my wife had meant when she said I should hate

the Van Zant function. She meant it was stuffy. She was right. Stuffiness rolled over me in an ever increasing wave. The depth of the carpet pile, the shrouded windows, the dull twinkle of the lights, the dwarfed reflection of our figures in the full-length mirrors—all intensified the feeling. The quiet was unbelievable. The hurried and anxious roar of the town outside had been entrapped and wrapped around with octopus tentacles of velvet and smothered in Brussels lace. Our advance partook of all the qualities of Kipling's nightmare—'the bellying of the curtain kept me always in one place.' It seemed to my drugged senses that we were doomed to sink our feet deeper and deeper in that carpet and never to progress.

"But the nightmare came to an end presently in front of a bright fire of cannel-coal, and a round little woman got up from a satin arm-chair and murmured, 'Dear child!' in my wife's direction. Nancy breathed, 'Dear Mrs. Van Zant!' in her turn, and kissed the cheek presented to her.

"'And this is my husband, dear Mrs. Van Zant.' Mrs. Van Zant offered her hand. It was a little round cushion of a hand. I solemnly pressed it. 'And how are you, dear Mr. Van Zant? May I present my husband?' Mr. Van Zant grunted, whether it was to express the state of his health or his willingness to make my acquaintance I had no way of knowing. A thin, bird-like woman, whose gentility was evident in every bead on her gown, proved to be 'dear Miss Culver,' and then 'dear Doctor Sciple' came in for a share of Nancy's sweetness, and the introductions were over. We selected chairs and sank down into a soft, warm silence.

"It was very evident that our host and hostess had made an exhausting effort in greeting us, and their guests plainly lacked the temerity to venture upon conversation. Miss Culver—Nancy told me afterward she had been the daughter's governess—sat in approved cultivated pose, her back rigid, her ankles crossed, and one hand grasping the wrist of the other in her glittering lap. Doctor Sciple went quite the other extreme in relaxing and overflowing his chair; my heart warmed toward him. 'Dear' Mr. and Mrs. Van Zant were as alike as the traditional two peas in stoutness. I don't think I had ever seen in all my life two people so richly adipose. The greatest difference between them was that Mrs. Van Zant's maid, with the help of an hour-glass corset, had contrived to divide her mistress's figure in two parts, upper and lower; but Mr. Van Zant, proving the superiority of the male species, had comfortably let his go all in one piece. They had the same amount of double chins, and the same little eyes that expressed nothing when they looked at you—nothing except content with themselves and everything that was theirs.

"I sat considering them. My wife's face had its far-away expression; I knew she was probably planning the next day's dinner. We kept no cook in those days. I stifled a yawn. I made mental bets with myself as to who would make the first opening. I guessed Miss Culver, but I was wrong. It was Doctor Sciple. Nancy also told me afterward that Doctor Sciple was the family physician. You see, we were invited to meet the family governess and the family doctor. The Van Zants slew at one stroke

their obligations to four objects of charity. It was a very good idea ; I was struck with it. But Nancy resented it bitterly.

“ Well, to go back, Doctor Sciple roused himself and remarked in his best bedside manner,—I knew it was his bedside manner, because, poor man, he'd lost all the others,—‘ It looked very much like rain as I came in.’ It was a very unfortunate choice. I could have told him as much myself, and this was my first visit, while he had probably been coming for the last thirty years. ‘ You’ve made a mistake, old boy,’ I thought. I was right, too ; the little group agitated itself to a marked degree. Mr. Van Zant moved his head several times and said : ‘ What’s that ? What’s that ? ’ I learned, as time went on, that he wasn’t deaf in the least degree,—he didn’t bother to listen.

“ Doctor Sciple coughed. Great timidity marked his next statement about the probability of rain. It was evident he wished he had picked one of the other openings. Mr. Van Zant understood it this time and didn’t approve of it. Mrs. Van Zant murmured, ‘ Tut ! tut ! ’ exactly what one would have thought she would murmur at anything. Miss Culver delicately tapped her foot and stonily looked at her knees. Doctor Sciple seemed more frightened than ever. He might easily have posed for the Rabbit at the Queen’s garden party.

“ Mr. Van Zant wedged himself from his chair and stood over us. ‘ Caroline,’—he boomed it,—‘ I told you we would have to order out the horses.’ Caroline clucked her commiserating ‘ Tut ! tut ! ’ once more, and her round, pink face puckered in great distress. The rest of us were silent ; we had no suggestion to offer. I could see the horses ; they were as round and fat and well fed as their masters, the brougham was without a speck of dust, and the harness shone like precious jewels. There would be a coachman and footman well on in the middle fifties, and they were round and well fed, were probably having their dinner in the servants’ hall at that moment. It would be tragic to have them out.

“ No one seemed to have the slightest suggestion to make ; plainly it was beyond the ability of any one present to cope with the situation. Then Nancy spoke to Mrs. Van Zant. She said, ‘ Dear Mrs. Van Zant, why not send and find out whether it is raining or not ? ’ ‘ What’s that ? ’ Mr. Van Zant turned to her. Nancy repeated her suggestion in exactly the same tone of voice. ‘ Yes, yes, Cornelius,’ and Cornelius considered it from all its many angles, and then plowed over and rang the bell.

“ While we waited, the tension enormously grew. Doctor Sciple seemed to feel his disgrace keenly ; no one looked at him. Miss Culver was endeavouring to appear detached. In all this time she had not changed the position of her hands by the fraction of an inch. The string of her poise was stretched so tightly, one could almost hear it vibrate.

“ The footman came back. He reported the weather fair ; the stars were out. We relaxed. Mr. Van Zant favoured Doctor Sciple with a walrus look, sank back in his chair, and abandoned his watch-fob seals, while a beatific smile spread itself over Mrs. Van Zant’s soft creases. ‘ Now, you

see, Cornelius,' she said in soft triumph, 'we won't have to have the horses, out, after all.' Turning to Nancy she kindly explained, 'Mr. Van Zant was afraid we would have to have the horses out, my dear.' Nancy nodded understandingly and would not meet my eye."

Evans paused. "My dear fellow, can you see them?"

"Yes," I said. "I should say I could. Marvellous, absolutely ripping—but I don't believe in them."

"Oh, you will," he assured me; "you will before I'm done."

He helped himself to a fresh cigarette; then he went on:

"Dinner was announced in time to save anyone else from further blunder. I had not uttered a word. Here was something entirely unexpected and precious. It so far surpassed my expectation that I could have hugged myself with joy of it. It really was too good to believe—a brand-new impression so perfectly fresh and unspoiled that I was actually afraid to breathe on it. The Van Zants and their atmosphere were as solid, as shapely, and as transparent as a block of ice.

"They belonged to thirty years back. They had been preserved, so I fondly told myself, in all their original juices, for my especial benefit. And surely no one was more capable of enjoying them. Time and time again I have seriously considered putting them into a book, but I've never done it. I grew fond of them, for one thing. In spite of their insufferable condescension, their ghastly snobbishness, and their unalterable opinion that trade of any sort, most of the professions, including that of literature, was 'low,' I could never bring myself to put them down.

"To get back once more. We went in to dinner. I bore the genteel Miss Culver on my arm. The dining-room was as overheated, as heavily upholstered, and fully as oppressive as the drawing-room. The table was round and immense. It was covered with a heavily incrustated cloth; there were five forks, four knives, and three sets of spoons at each place, four wine-glasses, and a silver goblet for water. The centre of the table was banked around a flat mirror with pink roses and Roman hyacinths, and there was a large circle of candles casting their reflection in the pseudo-miniature lake.

"We seated ourselves according to the crested place cards, and I took up the menu with interest. I noted we were offered a choice of thick or clear soup; everything was on the same lavish scale. I congratulated myself as I ran over the list of seasonable and unseasonable delicacies. There was terrapin, procured heaven knows how; canvasbacks, with their attendant hominy, celery, and currant jelly; an English roast, huge and oppressive. I don't need to refresh my mind; every item of that two-hour dinner stands out in my memory like an electric sign on Broadway. And, as a matter of fact, we had, with slight variation, the identical things throughout the entire time we dined with the Van Zants. There was a pheasant pie, French artichokes, asparagus, Bar-le-Duc strawberries; and between one of the courses a compôte of fresh pears in champagne was put down to tempt our fagged appetites. Never had I imagined such a feast.

“ The wines—you’ll not believe me, but the champagne served from the fish to the roast was a vintage of ninety-two ! I know, because upon this point Mr. Van Zant made himself very clear. His statement, as he held his glass up to the light, conveyed the only audible and intelligent remark he had made since we had left the drawing-room. Throughout the entire dinner my glass was being constantly replenished, with a very superlative *vin ordinaire*, and when we had reached the Camembert cheese stage, a Romanee Conti Burgundy that shone in its etched glasses like light from the Grail, replaced everything else. When the ladies had left us, decanters of port were placed on the bare table, and a crested silver box, cedar lined, with part of an apple cunningly concealed in its top, were put within our easy reach.”

Evans smiled reflectively. “ Just imagine all this put down before a poverty-stricken scribbler who was making, perhaps, all told, fifteen hundred a year. At that time our domestic arrangements were of the sketchiest. We had a small apartment on East 29th Street. Nancy prepared our breakfasts and delicatessen dinners, and we lunched at various restaurants in the neighbourhood of wherever we happened to be. But to go back to that first dinner.

“ There was no general conversation. The six of us sat in unbroken silence. Nancy, at her end of the table, did make an effort to distract Mr. Van Zant, and he favoured her with a few grunts between his suspicious peerings into huge silver dishes that the butler uncovered for his inspection before he turned them over to the footmen to take to the side-tables and parcel out to us. Once a dish did not look up to the mark, and there was a lifted fork and a low rumble. The butler bent his head and deigned to murmur a few words in his master’s ear, and the course of the dinner was unchecked. I sat on Mrs. Van Zant’s left. The post of honour was given to Doctor Sciple by reason of his heavier standing. Nancy and Miss Culver shared in like manner Mr. Van Zant. Miss Culver, I was interested to note, had turned down her first wine-glass, and no further effort was made to serve her. Doctor Sciple, Mr. Van Zant, and I went steadily along without refusals. Mr. Van Zant frequently consoled himself with second helpings, sufficient proof, if we had needed any, that this was in no way a formal affair. As course succeeded entrée, and entrée, course, I began to crave a cigarette, but I dared not light one. Doctor Sciple surreptitiously helped himself, under cover of a cough, to a small pink pellet taken from an object that resembled a round silver watch, which he took from his waistcoat pocket.

“ Miss Culver picked daintily at the food of her plate. Nancy frankly gave up somewhere between the roast and salad. She told me later that she had always done so. I was rapidly becoming quite stuffed. Breathing became difficult, and I knew why it was that no one talked.

“ Mrs. Van Zant murmured first to Doctor Sciple and then to me in half-hour intervals. She asked me if I had heard the new star Emma Eames, and then, without waiting for my reply, she told me she understood that

there was a new impresario at the Metropolitan—a Mr. Gatti-Casazza. I said gravely that it was undoubtedly true. Once she kindly asked if I enjoyed my work. ‘It is a newspaper, isn’t it?’ I said I did enjoy it. Then she said something further to the effect that newspaper work must be very fatiguing. Did I not find it fatiguing? Doctor Sciple heard some of this and looked up from his hot artichokes to tell me he had always understood that newspaper men were extremely loyal to their journals. To this illuminating remark I ventured, by way of a reply, to set up a distinction: I was not, in the exact sense, a newspaper man.

“‘Really?’ said Doctor Sciple, suspiciously. ‘I understood from your wife that you were connected with *The Post*’.”

“‘I am,’ I hastened to assure him. Mrs. Van Zant’s mouth was beginning to pucker distressfully. ‘I do write for *The Post*, Sunday articles usually, but I am in no way connected with the staff; and so—’ I remember I floundered still a little longer before Mrs. Van Zant said, ‘But you do write for a newspaper, don’t you, Mr. Evans?’ I saw myself fairly trapped, and I weakened to “Yes.” ‘Then you might be said to call yourself a newspaper man, since you write for one?’ she stolidly pointed out. I admitted that I might. Any explanation I could have made would have been a distinction without a difference. The subject was dropped. Thereafter in both Mrs. Van Zant’s mind and Doctor Sciple’s would rest a suspicion that for some dark and nefarious purpose I had attempted to cover up my calling.

III

“By now you will have noticed what I discovered early in our acquaintance, that the Van Zants, by reason of the swaddling with which they had surrounded themselves, and their age, were utterly unable to change any of their preconceived opinions or ideas. Once they received a fact, it was forever sealed in its pristine state within their consciousness. No sort of operation could remove it or change it in any degree. They showed this by signs of distress on Mrs. Van Zant’s part and anger on Mr. Van Zant’s. It was hopeless to tell them anything, for by curiously distorted logic they entrapped you and led you complacently back to your starting-point. In those fifteen years there were never any arguments at that dinner-table. Books, music, the theatres were seldom, if ever, mentioned. They had all ceased to exist when the Van Zants had ceased to notice them. The conversation rarely varied. Mr. Van Zant grunted at Nancy, and Mrs. Van Zant asked me if I enjoyed my work and if newspapers weren’t ‘fatiguing.’ The state of the weather came in for a large share of notice, and with the brandy and cigars Mr. Van Zant told a long and involved anecdote that had to do with an Irishman and a Scotsman. He leaned back in the black walnut chair that tightly encased him, his huge stomach covered in stiff white linen and black broadcloth, encompassed by a gold chain. His chins waggled when he talked, and clutched in one fat, gouty hand he held a thin and elegant cigar.

"As time passed, their eyes beamed with something akin to recognition and fondness as we came down the drawing-room towards them. It may not have been fondness. I gave it considerable thought ; I believe the word 'usedness' would fit the case more nearly. They became used to us, and for that reason liked us. They never failed to send the engraved card with the dinner invitation upon it at exactly the same season of the year, and Nancy and I always went. The company never changed. Doctor Sciple continued to take his pink pellets during dinner, Miss Culver, growing thinner and darker as time went by, still picked delicately at the twelve-course dinners that were offered us. The Van Zants grew older so slowly that we hardly noticed it from one year to the next. The war was fought, and its head-lines faded from the papers, but no change was apparent at the Van Zants'.

"Things, however, did not stand so still for Nancy and me. I published a book, my first ; perhaps you remember it. It did fairly well, and we moved away from 29th Street to an apartment in Gramercy Park. Our eldest son was born. Nancy did talk to Mrs. Van Zant of baby-clothes and croup, I remember, and she and the baby received donations of roses and hothouse grapes for several weeks.

"I did another novel and then a play. Our second boy was born, and we decided to move to the country. We bought the small place we have now on the sound. We also got an automobile.

"It was about this time that Nancy conceived the idea of having the Van Zants to dinner. I think possessing a butler of her own must have gone to her head. It took me two years entirely to dissuade her. I pointed out that it would spoil everything. What possible good could it do any one except herself to have them dine with us ? Why ruin an unique situation, which, if carefully nursed, would give us unbounded joy, for the satisfaction of showing them our set of Sèvres china and our less ornate damask ?

"Finally, she gave up her plan to get even with them, and consented to regard the Van Zants in the light of a priceless boon. Her observation of the phenomenon became heightened. If anything escaped me, she was there to remind me that such-and-such had happened. It was she who noticed that Duganne, the Van Zant butler, had been replaced by some one who looked enough like him to be his twin. We never inquired for Duganne, but we mourned him.

"Our first automobile had been replaced by a closed car, and the gardener on the place drove us into town to any social functions we wished to attend. We agreed that it would never do to shock Duganne by driving up and alighting from our motor. So, much to our chauffeur's mystification, we alighted around the corner and trudged on foot to the door and Duganne's kindly ministrations.

"Nancy made it a rule to wear all of her oldest and dowdiest evening gowns. She did allow me a dinner jacket. It passed unnoticed. We might have appeared in burnoose and turbans ; the Van Zants never really saw us. That is, they never saw us until the grand disaster."

Evans leaned forward and pushed the little bell in the wainscoting that summoned the steward.

"What will you have?" he said, turning back to me.

"The same," I replied. And, accordingly, our glasses were replenished. After a moment he went on again:

"There were no perceptible changes, as I have said before. Yes, once, I believe, Miss Culver did stay away—grippe. On that occasion the Van Zants were completely lost. They couldn't have been more so if they had been set down in the subway and left to find their way home. Mrs. Van Zant fluttered and murmured, 'Poor dear Miss Culver!' Mr. Van Zant was heard to wheeze that she was 'a dam' fine woman.' Doctor Sciple added a token of his respect, and Nancy and I hung our memorial wreath beside it. She was back the following winter, and once again the tradition was perfected.

"After a meagre little acquaintance of six years, Mr. Van Zant addressed me pleasantly as 'my boy.' He continued to do this as my hair thinned on top and finally disappeared entirely. I developed considerable embonpoint, but I was still 'my boy' until the very end. Nancy grew stouter, and her hair grey; but to Mrs. Van Zant she was still 'dear child' and our children's ailments were inquired into as though they were still in the nursery.

"Nancy and I began to feel that this state of affairs was to last forever, since time and death still continued to show the Van Zants proper respect. But everything comes to an end sooner or later, as has already been pointed out by some keen observer.

"In 1919—I know the exact date,—one cold January night we goloshed around the corner from where we had left the car and yielded ourselves to the Van Zant menials. When we were admitted to the drawing-room we were overcome to find a stranger added to our party. A middle-aged and slightly grizzled Englishman had joined our circle around the fire. The Van Zants were excited to the point of good manners, Miss Culver was positively twittering, and Doctor Sciple was booming out platitudes in his best bedside voice. The gentleman proved to be Colonel Aubrey Gaylesworth, son of a gentleman of title who had known the Van Zants in the old days when they did a little globe-trotting. Mr. Van Zant told several reminiscent tales of having shot on his lordship's moor and of stays in his lordship's castle. The colonel was over on an inspection trip, and incidentally to transact a little business in connection with the embassy at Washington. He had brought a letter from his father, and the Van Zants were doing the proper thing by him.

"He was a very pleasant-looking chap; the hale and British sportsman shone from his ruddy face. I could see that Nancy wished she had worn a newer gown. I sat back and watched. The Van Zants were about to die an apoplectic death in their endeavour to keep up with him. He was enthusiastic about New York. He plainly felt that his interest would be appreciated, and he plied the Van Zants with questions. He particularly

admired the Woolworth Tower. It developed that our hosts had never seen it. He spoke of the aquarium, compared it in glowing terms with the more famous one at Monte Carlo. The Van Zants had never been there, but had a suspicion it was at Battery Park. 'Oh, yes, the Battery, surely.' Mrs. Van Zant said it was a delightful place to drive, the water was so pretty. The colonel went on to Broadway; how many theatres did we have now? I supplied this bit of information. 'Really?' It was too remarkable! 'And the Follies!' But the Van Zants had given up long ago; they couldn't follow him there. 'The hotels, rippin', simply rippin'.

"Dinner was announced, and we all got up with evident relief. Our hosts could not be expected to be catechised while anything so sacrosanct as food was before them. Their wish to please their guests, their nervousness, and their entire inability to cope with the situation were very amusing and at the same time a little pathetic. I trembled for them and I suffered as we arranged ourselves round the table.

"Dinner went on as always. The colonel ate heartily and praised the ducks. Mr. Van Zant told him his steward had been in his service forty-five years. After this heroic effort to be entertaining he abandoned his guest for the issue in hand. The colonel fell to Nancy, and she filled in the gap in her best fashion. I rather envied him from my place between Miss Culver and Doctor Sciple. We dragged on until the dessert, and then Mrs. Van Zant retrieved her train and got heavily to her feet. At this signal the ladies, as they had done for years, rose to follow her. Nancy went reluctantly, I could see that. She knew the sanctity of this custom had been ripped away. The colonel gallantly replaced one of the powdered flunkys at the door and bowed them out.

"We seated ourselves once more, this time grouped at Mr. Van Zant's end of the table. The cloth was removed, and the port and cigars were passed. The colonel regretted Nancy's going, I could also see that. He regarded us in turn, evidently speculating as to which of the three might furnish him with some new information or impression. Mr. Van Zant was endeavouring to clip the end of a cigar, and his fingers, stiff and swollen with his ancient enemy, were pitifully slow. He hardly seemed a likely source. Doctor Sciple was as equally absorbed extracting a pink pellet. He settled on me.

"I had always made it a rule to avoid any discussions under that roof which might let the glare of modernity into the Van Zant tomb. Naturally, I prepared for his onset with apprehension.

" 'I wonder now if Harrison Evans, the novelist, you know, is a member of your family. We think so highly of him in England.'

" 'My name is Harrison Evans,' I replied in a tone that I endeavoured to make as little fatuous as possible.

" 'Oh, I say, now—well, really now, this is a happy chance,' He hitched his chair nearer mine and was immediately in full flood. 'Just before I left London I saw your play *Beachcombers*; a bully thing it is, too. Don't think I ever saw an ending that did me in so—' He rose to a tidal

wave; you know the sort of thing socially apt people pour out on even the most obscure of us.

"Doctor Sciple was weightily interested in all this. He was making noble efforts at readjustment. Presently he plunged in with, 'I thought you were connected in some way with one of our metropolitan journals, Evans?' It was my chance to settle that ancient score, but I let the opening pass and mumbled a negative. 'So you write books? I congratulate you,' he went on in the same light elephantine manner.

" 'Is it possible you did not know?' Colonel Gaylesworth asked him.

"Doctor Sciple rounded a full period with the information that he had been re-reading Bulwer-Lytton for the last few years, and so hadn't an opportunity to get into the moderns very much. The colonel's eye alighted next upon Mr. Van Zant; he was about to demand a tribute from him. But Mr. Van Zant forestalled him. He stood up with the help of the table and said, 'We will join the ladies in the drawing-room.' That was all. This was no fitting time to deal with me; I understood and agreed with him.

"We were a very disorganised group as we descended to our coffee. Nancy regarded us with suppressed questions in her eyes. As soon as the colonel had received his cup from Mrs. Van Zant's hand he made for her and told her he had just discovered he had been spending the evening in the same room with Harrison Evans and did not know it until a few minutes ago. Nancy cast one appalled and fleeting glance at me and then at Mr. Van Zant's suffused face before she yielded herself up to him.

"It was too late now for regrets. I drank my coffee and looked at the tragedy from every angle. I had stupidly let myself be carried along upon a sea of adulation while the Van Zants had been betrayed before my eyes. It was tragic. What was more, it smacked of rankest ingratitude. They had accepted Nancy and me as charity; charity we should have remained in the name of all decency. I looked across at Mr. Van Zant and hastily away again. He was dissected and quivering before my eyes. I felt very low myself. Things would never be the same again, no matter what their reaction was to my changed condition. They would drop us.

IV

"Well,"—Evans leaned over and blotted out the end of his cigarette,—
"that is what happened."

"You don't mean," I interrupted, "that you never saw them again?"
Evans nodded.

"They never asked us again. Nancy and I have never laid eyes on them from that day to this."

"Oh, my Lord!" I leaned back in my chair and laughed until I was faint.

"When I had stood as much of the colonel's voice as I possibly could—he gave no one a chance to talk about anything else except Harrison Evans,

and you can imagine how I loved the sound of my name by that time—I signalled to Nancy, and we got up to go. We didn't get rid of him so easily though; he went with us. Tore himself away from the outstretched arms of the Van Zants and followed us to the sidewalk and around the block to our car. I don't know what he thought of us for parking it there. We took him down and dropped him in front of his blessed 'Follies'; we wouldn't go with him. Then Nancy and I went home. We felt that there had been a death in the family and we wanted to be alone to mourn."

"You didn't call?"

"No; we considered it, and decided not. We waited until the next year. We watched the mail feverishly; the invitation didn't come. It never came again."

"Are they still living?"

"I think so. Yes, they are still living, of course they are; they're deathless. Once a year they gather with Doctor Sciple, reduced to taking more pink pellets as time goes by, and the cultivated Miss Culver, in that drawing-room with its blue satin walls and the Aubusson carpet, and discuss the weather and their ailments. Nancy and I are never mentioned. Our brief little stay among them was a mistake and not to be discussed. It is something that has never been."

"Ah, you should write it," I said as Evans got to his feet preparatory to departing bedward: "you really should, my dear fellow!"

But Evans only shook his head as he bade me good-night.

JOHN TAYLOR

Author and Publisher

1781—1864

By OLIVE M. TAYLOR

I

IN a curious old cupboard in an old house in an old market town, lay for many years a dusty pile of old family letters. I have endeavoured to sort out those written by my great-uncle John Taylor to my great-grandfather James Taylor of Retford, to my grandfather James Taylor of Bakewell, and to my father James Taylor of Bakewell.

It is a voluminous correspondence, and from it I have taken extracts—more especially of the earlier years—which I hope will help to make a picture of the man, taking for my apology a sentence from Mr. Edmund Blunden's article in *THE LONDON MERCURY* :

The importance of Taylor in English literature, of course, is far greater than that of many writers of whom more account has been taken : the man who published and so fully recognised Keats, not to mention the publisher of Lamb, Hazlitt, de Quincey, Clare and others, and the Editor of the *London Magazine*, has been familiar only as a name.

John Taylor was of Scottish blood, his grandfather, William Taylor, having come down from Forfarshire with Prince Charlie's army. The Jacobite William Taylor settled in York and married Elizabeth Wilson of Leeds. Their youngest son James, born at York in 1752, came to Retford in Nottinghamshire, with his young wife, in 1778. Here he established himself as a Publisher and brought up a large family, namely, Ann, Major (who died in infancy), *John*, Sarah, Elizabeth, James, William, Jane and Henry.

A happy and united family they were, growing up in an atmosphere of books and family jokes, varied by the excitements of the elections at Retford, skating on the canal, and games and merriment in the old panelled parlour of the house in the Market Place. John must have been of small stature, judging from his numerous jokes on the subject. The medallion of him in the National Portrait Gallery shows him, however, to have had a fine intellectual head. Ann and John were fond of poetry and of scribbling verses we are told. I have discovered a tin hat-box full of Nancy's poetical efforts, but of John's not a vestige remains. A tender and beautiful affection existed between John and James, who was seven years his junior. When fate decreed that in 1802 James should go to seek his fortune at Bakewell, the letters from the elder brother are full of good advice and helpful counsel, and he directs the younger lad's studies, earnestly exhorting him to keep up his Latin, and sending down books for his better edification. But Retford was too narrow a sphere to satisfy the growing ambitions of young John, and full of high hopes and happy expectations, he left for

London in 1803, having obtained a position with Messrs. Lackington & Co. at the famous "Temple of the Muses" in Finsbury Square. From *Shadows of the Old Booksellers*, by Mr. Charles Knight, I take this description of Lackington's :

When I was about ten years old, my father took me to London for a short holiday. . . . The dingy warehouses of the great marts of literature did not attract much of my curiosity. But my father had a sight in reserve for me, almost as remarkable as Saint Paul's or Mrs. Salmon's waxwork. I went with him to "The Temple of the Muses." The building was burnt down some years ago, but I have engravings which assist my recollection of what I saw in 1801. At one of the corners of Finsbury Square, which was built in 1789, there was a block of houses which had been adapted to the purposes of a great shop or warehouse, and presented an imposing frontage. A dome rises from the centre, on the top of which a flag is flying. This royal manifestation (now become common to suburban public-houses) proclaims that this is no ordinary commercial establishment. Over the principal entrance is inscribed "Cheapest Booksellers in the World." It is the famous shop of Lackington, Allen and Co., "where above Half a Million of Volumes are constantly on Sale." We enter the vast area, whose dimensions are to be measured by the assertion that a coach and six might be driven round it. In the centre is an enormous circular counter, within which stood the dispensers of knowledge, ready to wait upon the country clergyman in his wig and shovel-hat ; upon the fine ladies, in feathers and trains ; or upon the bookseller's collector, with his dirty bag. . . . We ascend a broad staircase, which leads to "The Lounging Rooms," and to the first of a series of circular galleries, lighted from the lantern of the dome, which also lights the ground floor. Hundreds, even thousands, of volumes are displayed on the shelves running round their walls. As we mount higher and higher, we find commoner books in shabbier bindings ; but there is still the same order preserved, each book being numbered according to a printed catalogue. This is larger than that of any other bookseller's, and it comes out yearly. The formation of such an establishment as this assumes a remarkable power of organisation, as well as a large command of capital.

Here, at first, all goes well with John, and he sits down at 10 o'clock at night to fill a huge sheet of paper with all the little happenings of the day which he knows will be eagerly read by the dear ones at home.

Dear Father,

17 Dec., 1803.

You would laugh to see how naturally I always stuff your great coat against the bottom of my Door. I have now just finished Tea and Supper and so I will have a little comfortable Conversation with you at home ; though by-the-bye, I shall have all the Talk—but that you know was not infrequently the Case when I was at home in reality. So I have only to fancy you are all tired of talking and then proceed without Interruption. I have got a large sheet of paper again—bigger I fear than I shall have time to fill, let me say whatever I can. First of all then I will begin about myself—and last of all I'll finish with myself—and in the middle of my letter, why, myself must be there too. . . . I am usually at the Temple of the Muses by 8 o'clock in the morning and generally home about $\frac{1}{4}$ before 9 at night, but my Employment has lately been of a different kind to what it was at first. I have spent nearly all of to-day and 5 or 6 Hours yesterday in the Counting House. Because (as I myself have the Vanity to suppose) writing a better and quicker Hand than any

other person in the House, I am chosen for these Offices. . . . I am very well and have every Comfort that I can expect in my Situation—nay, I may say more than I could expect. What a happiness it is to me that I am able to write so as to give Satisfaction. I owe many comfortable Hours to that alone, ever since my Arrival here, and my mates jocularly tell me that I am Head Clerk and they expect shall shortly be Foreman. True! I shall be *shortly* whenever I am so. And all this comes of learning to write. Another of my Accomplishments came into play the very last night. I tried with the eldest prentice to play Duetts upon the Flute, and, by Mr. Lackington's Desire (who came to hear us) I drank Tea and supped there. And that comes of playing on the Flute. Depend upon it, dear Mother, we cannot learn *too much*—as you used to tell me. My Latin comes in use every Day, not only in reading Latin Titles, but even in Conversation with persons who come into the Shop. Nay, it was but this morning that I picked up a scarce Latin Book, giving an account of some of the most rare and Valuable Books, and had I not recollected what I learnt at school, I should neither have known the Book, nor have been able to profit by it if I had. . . . In the knowledge of old Books I cannot be too perfect. You may believe that I miss no opportunity of obtaining Knowledge in my Profession. . . . Now I'll go to bed and to-morrow finish this Side. Good-night Father and Mother. Good-night Sally, Bessy, Jane and Henry. The two last are asleep and you none of you hear me.

The satisfaction of working hard from eight in the morning till half-past eight at night, and the pleasure of drinking tea with Mr. Lackington was presently to be followed by the happiness of hearing fair words from Mr. Allen, one of the partners.

. . . I was writing in the Counting House when Mr. Allen came in and sat down beside me. He enquired where I now dined. I told him at an Eating House in White Cross Street. He was sorry he said that I was compelled to have recourse to such places and if I chose I should dine in his Family. I very thankfully accepted his offer. He moreover told me that they considered me in a way different from the other young men and intended always to treat me as a Gentleman. He commended my activity and obliging Attention in terms too flattering for me to repeat, observing that except by myself, Hessey (an Apprentice but of very genteel and wealthy Connexions) and those immediately connected with the Concern, Politeness was very little regarded. He said I was beloved by the whole House—and it's a good deal bigger than our Town Hall, Council Room and Shambles together.

The high hopes and happy expectations were soon to be bitterly disappointed as the following letter plainly shows :

Dear Father,

26 March, 1804.

I have left Messrs. Lackington & Co. You shall now have the whole particulars in as fair and regular rotation as I can give them. I told Mr. Allen that I could wish if he were disengaged to have a little conversation with him about my wages. He accordingly in about an hour afterwards asked me into the Counting House. Mr. Kirkman and he were there and after asking me what I expected and I telling them that I trusted entirely to their honour and generosity, they requested me to go out for a short time. Upon my returning, after a Consultation between the 2 worthy Governors they informed me that it was a favourite plan with Mr. Whitbread the Brewer to allow his men a moderate salary per year, and then when their wages

were paid, to make them an addition by way of a present proportional to the satisfaction they had given him by their good behaviour. (Very well Sirs) "Therefore we have thought proper to allow you 20£ a year and I will make you a present at Christmas." I will forbear if I can to make any observations although the recollection of their despicable and unjust conduct moves me so that I can hardly hold my pen. I left the Counting House without any reply. I went the next morning to Mr. Kirkman who was alone in the Counting House and told him that I had seriously reflected upon a matter that was *unworthy* one moment's serious Reflection and told him respectfully but firmly that I was sorry the illiberal Conduct of my Employers compelled me to give in my Resignation. That I came with intent that morning to finally close all my Connection with them. He attempted some pitiful excuse, but I was so prepared with unanswerable Objections that he gave up *any* defence whatever. All he desired was that I would stay till he had seen Mr. Allen. I replied that I would remain there that Day but no longer—Saturday passed—and although I saw them frequently together yet I found no Notice was taken of me. On Monday morning therefore I dressed myself for a holiday and made my Appearance at the Temple fully expecting that then I should have a final answer. Mr. Allen was there but said nothing to me and as Mr. Kirkman had told me that he (Mr. K.) was the only person by whom my Complaints must be redressed and that I had myself no *Business* to speak to Mr. Allen, I left the Shop again. After Mr. Kirkman had as I thought dined, I called upon him at his own House. He received me very cavalierly and told me "that I behaved ill in leaving them at all without receiving his answer. Mr. A. *might* have made me a very handsome present at the End of the Year—full as much or more than I was aware of—that they intended to have put me forward extremely—I should shortly have been taken into the House and placed upon the Establishment—I was very soon to have received a very *important* TRUST and eventually I might have risen to very great consequence." Much more he said but is not this sufficient to provide me with absolute and unanswerable Arguments wherewith to defend myself. Who, in the first place, would have waited with patience till Mr. Allen had *time* to repeat his offer of 20£ a year? Who with one spark of Independence in his Composition would smirk and smile to all Mr. Allen said, at all he did, in vain hope of a *present* (above all things) to be given at his Discretion. I *can* work and I would bear all hardships, rather than submit to such an Indignity. If I were of that value to him which Mr. Kirkman inadvertently confessed when he mentioned to what importance I was to have been advanced, what *Excuse* can they make for their ungenerous and *dishonest* Conduct? They say I came for Improvement and they considered me as a Gentleman, but was I a Gentleman in other Respects? I refused no Employ however humble, I came with the rest, I worked with the rest, I did not leave the Shop at Night until they all did—I was equal with the lowest in everything but my Wages—there I am to be a Gentleman forsooth! I am to have 7/6 a week and my Dinner, and a Man picked up in the street without a Coat to his Back or a Character of any Description is made my Associate at the Counter upon an Allowance of 17/- to 22/- weekly. Shame on their meanness but so it is. To their great disgrace they will take a Man in who never saw a Book before and give him every—nay far more advantage than their own Apprentices. I have since been out of place as I don't choose to apply to the lower class of Booksellers. . . .

Believe me my dear Father, Mother, Sisters and Brothers,

Yours not melancholy by any means

John Taylor.

The time spent at the Temple of the Muses was chiefly remarkable for having introduced John Taylor to his future partner, James Augustus Hessey. Writing to his father in 1804, John says :

I think I shall change my Habitation too, for you must have heard me mention a very genteel and friendly young Man who is Apprentice with Lackingtons of the name of Hessey. He has had for a long time a most unpleasant Situation with his Masters, always sitting in the Kitchen with the Servants and taking all his Meals with them—besides there is not a room in the house except the Kitchen that he can see his Friends in, or sit in Solitude himself. He therefore told Mr. Allen to-day of these unpleasant Circumstances and begged that he would let him lodge elsewhere. Mr. A. tried to reconcile him to put up with these Indignities but he was resolved to bear it no longer so Mr. Allen consented, but what they will allow him he does not yet know. The honourable Firm are to hold Consultation on the subject. However, Hessey says, if they will allow him nothing, he will support himself as well as he can and get out of the house if possible. If he does I think of taking part of a more genteel room than I at present possess and board with some regular Family along with him. We can have a handsome room for less money if both of us join in occupying it. However of this I will tell you more when I have more fully determined. I don't like dining at Eating Houses any better than I did, and my present Landlady cannot supply me with a Dinner, because, as she says, they are obliged, being Butchers, to take those parts of Meat for their Family Eating which nobody else will buy.

Before many days John found employment with Messrs. Vernor and Hood. Mr. Hood (the father of Tom Hood) was his friend from the first, and John became greatly attached to him and all his family, living for a time at their house in the Poultry and becoming a much trusted clerk to his master. He often spent happy Sundays with them in their Hampstead home, and I seldom find Mr. Hood's name mentioned in the later letters without some pleasant adjective in front of it. The following extracts give a fair picture of his life at Vernor and Hood's :

April 3rd, 1804. Well, my dear Father and Mother, I have at last good news to tell you. I called on Mr. Hood this Morning according to Agreement and have engaged myself with him on a salary for the first half-year at the rate of £70 per annum, Lodging and Boarding out of the house. But he says, and I am desirous of believing him, that if I answer his Opinion of me, he shall not limit my Salary to 70£. How different from my late Employers ! . . . I go therefore to-morrow Morning for the first time and my Employment will be of the most useful and agreeable Nature, in short, the very Business that Mr. H. himself is engaged in. Our time is from nine in the morning until 8 at night, excepting not more than 2 nights in a month at Magazine time, then we may stay till ten or eleven.

April 10th. . . . I had nearly forgot to tell you that last Saturday I was paid my wages for a full week though I only went on Wednesday morning. You don't know how proud I was of that money. It was the first I had received of my own Earning since I came to London.

(To his Sisters) When I come down, if I have money sufficient we will be as jovial as possible and see all our old Friends again. But as it will depend in a great measure on my overflow of Cash, I don't know when that desirable time will come to pass. Hessey jocularly tells me that I shall be a minor partner in the House in a

little while and has betted a *Bottle of Madeira* on the circumstance taking place within 2 years time. But I being behind the Scenes, find that a partner is not necessary while Mr. Hood remains so active himself.

April 29th. Mr. Hood's behaviour to me is uniformly kind and free—In a word exactly the reverse of my first Masters—as I cannot praise them less, so I cannot praise him more. He shews me how his Business is conducted, and makes me acquainted with its internal management and external concerns. He went out yesterday about 10 o'clock to spend the whole day at Mr. Cuthell's Country House at Turnham Green, and I was left at home his deputy supreme. I had a Levee of Engravers, Designers, and Authors, in imitation of my Master, and among the latter there was Robert Bloomfield. He had received a letter from Portsmouth enclosing a note for 10*l* and requesting him to write a poem on the death of a late eminent Naval Character, and give the writer the opportunity of publishing it as his own. Mr. Bloomfield's Letter was as keen as an injured Author could indite. He returned the 10*l* to its owner, and gave such a benediction with it as will satisfy the writer, I think, without further application there or elsewhere. As for my "great abilities," as Nancy says, I do not let them lie dormant even in a wholesale house. I have contributed a few Articles of poetry to the poetical magazine, and one Day when in Conversation with the Editor of that publication, I mentioned the poems of Mr. Balfour as being the best in the Collection, he answered that he must differ from me there, saying, those in the name of (my feigned Signature) were most valuable. But in spite of this encouragement, and my own Vanity, I assure you that I am far from wishing for any fame on that account.

The Poultry, 5 June, 1804. Mr Hood is a very domestic Man—a good Master and a good Father. Mrs. Hood is a pleasant unaffected Woman, very cheerful and free from that foolish formality which makes many of our Citizens' Wives stiff as the Pyramids of Egypt. They have five children—the eldest a nice boy about as old as our William—he goes to school—the next a Girl, about as old as Jane—The next a boy rather younger than Harry—The two next are Twins and both Girls—and very fine Children they are.

Aug. 28th. I am more than ever attached to Mr. and Mrs. Hood. They are so very kind, and so very free, that I can say anything to them and feel as much at ease as if with you. Mr. Hood so entirely divests himself of all care when in the midst of his Family and Friends, that he is always playful and merry—and looks more like a laughing Lad than a Man of business.

John was now working very hard, getting up to take a French lesson between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning and often not returning from the publishing office until close on midnight. His friendship with Hessey continues and they spend as many evenings as possible together, attempting to tune the ancient piano into something like harmony, or, more often "running over a little Greek together by way of recovering what we have lost of that language since we left school." The letters to his people at Retford breathe a spirit of cheery optimism, but in writing to his "dear Jem" at Bakewell there is a slight strain of melancholy apparent :

March 5th, 1805. The Cares of Business being over with me for this Day, I have retired to my Apartment near the Skies to cogitate and vegetate—but as my Diet will be Water Gruel (as soon as it is ready) so you will receive from me a sort of Water Gruel Epistle. I have the Headache and lowness of Spirits—but 'tis

better than the *Heartache*—though that is a Disorder of which I am no competent Judge, and I wish that at my Age, Jem, you may have known it as little. I am ill-natured and peevish—and a little railing does me good, so you must excuse me—I have had no recent Cause to complain in this manner—so I libel no one—I only wish, for the sake of the world, that Mankind was as honest and virtuous as I once imagined—But to see as I do daily, thousands fattening on the spoil of thousands—In this great Town, as in a great pit full of People, to observe one scrambling over another, kicking, scratching, biting and all sorts of unfair Tricks practised to raise each Man higher than his Neighbour, is absolutely disgusting—and I sometimes wish for 50£ a year and a Cottage until I reflect that “ something must ever be amiss.” It is the common lot of Mortality and was wisely ordained to prevent a too great fondness for this Life. You stare at your philosophical Brother. You don’t consider that I am sitting aloof, and that the great Theatre of Life lies beneath my view where “ each man struts his hour on the stage, and then is heard no more.” It will not be till nine o’clock to-morrow morning that I shall descend to mix among, and scuffle with them—But here is my Water Gruel—have patience my boy, and I shall revive again—Patience and Water Gruel you know are fine things.

To me there is a pathos about this letter though I smile when I reflect how thoroughly Mr. Woodhouse of Hartfield would have approved of the means taken to cure the headache. This Water Gruel mood was happily but a fleeting one, for a little later he writes :

I am quite well again. Indeed I believe Hypochondria or low Spirits was my principal disorder. It occasionally takes me after a close confining Day, when I return at Night to my Lodging, and perceive that, like Mungo Park, I have no one but Strangers round me, “ no wife nor Mother’s Care, for him the Milk and Corn prepare ” nor do I always find such Strangers as his poor Negro Woman.

There now occurs a break in the letters and it was during this time that the partnership with Hessey was entered into. When next we hear of them they are living at 93, Fleet Street, with two friends, Frederick Falkner (who subsequently became Hessey’s brother-in-law) and Frank Haden, a charming young man who afterwards went out to the Peninsular War. During his sojourn in the bachelor household he instituted the custom of family prayers among them.

Sept. 1807. What a Society we are here at No. 93 ! Four crusty Bachelors sitting round a Pembroke Table to Breakfast, Dinner and Tea. I believe I have given you a history of them before—Let me try to afford you some Idea of their persons and manners. James Augustus Hessey is thin, dresses principally in black, his face is round and good-humoured when he does not frown—when he does, *it has the contrary expression*. He is about 22, but retains a boyish appearance about the head. His application is good—his Conversation and manners lively. He has a readiness of droll quotation, and humorous allusion—is somewhat witty but had rather be considered a man of strong sense. His enunciation is not very distinct, but rapid, and when he wishes to utter his opinion in a serious manner, he hesitates or stutters a little, as if in doubt what words to select next. His reading has been various, but not ~~very~~ deep nor extensive. He can speak with propriety on all subjects because his good sense teaches him how far he is qualified to speak. He is a

great favourite wherever he goes, particularly with young Ladies, who like him for his cheerfulness, and because he sings a little, plays a little, and dances well. The former enables him to take the Bass or Second of a Song with them (and that is all, for he never sings alone). His knowledge of the Flute qualifies him to play an Accompaniment to the Piano. His Dancing is of service once or twice a year. In a word he has Wit and Accomplishments sufficient to please everybody, and Sense enough to make *them* the subordinate parts of his character.

The house in Fleet Street became the rendezvous for a circle of young men who met together to read and write and argue. A debating club was started which flourished exceedingly. The circle was now enlarging. The first name of importance to be mentioned is that of Richard Woodhouse.

March, 1811. We seem now quite deserted. Fred and Bob (Falkner) having gone back to Bath and George (Stothert) being at present at Birmingham. I have made an acquaintance lately, by means of George, with whom he was intimate, who will in some degree supply the place of the Absentees. His name is Richard Woodhouse. He is not more than 22 years old—a lawyer—at present with a Conveyancer in the Temple. As I have given you portraits of all my other friends it is but fair that you should have a picture of him. He is about my own size but thinner, has red hair and a florid complexion. His eyes are deep seated under a straight projecting line which should have eyebrows upon it in this manner [here follows a rough sketch]. It is a poor drawing to be sure but I cannot mend it. The character of the face is that of gravity and deep thought more than genius. He joins us in our Essay-writing and in our Debates—in which he engages solely, as we do, for improvement. We reckon him a valuable addition to our party as he possesses much of that knowledge which many of us want, viz. : of the laws and Constitution of the Country. He is an excellent Classic having been last of all at Eton School—has a turn for poetry by no means contemptible—though he thinks meanly enough of it—is abstemious to a remarkable degree, of great industry, averse to pleasure (in the London acceptation of the word) rises early—reads much and with the strictest attention—Above all things he is extremely attentive to religious duties, has the highest veneration for the Scriptures in which he delights to read, is of a retired modest behaviour, and possesses more real humility than (I was going to say) any one I know ; but certainly I think as much. He is a native of Bath and was a schoolfellow of Bob, Fred and George. Thus much for Master Richard Woodhouse, by whose conversation and example I already feel considerably improved. The worst of our present mode of passing our time is, that we sit up too late at night writing and conversing, and take too little Exercise. But as the fine weather approaches, I am resolved to mend in this respect if I can.

John Taylor was now a fully-fledged London citizen and a member of the Company of Girdlers. He had already made his appearance as an author with *Junius Identified*, in which he proved that Sir Philip Francis was the writer of the then famous “Letters.” Lord Brougham, who reviewed *Junius Identified* in the *Edinburgh*, declared that the argument almost amounted to a mathematical demonstration fixing the authorship on Sir Philip Francis.

The next change that took place in the life of the partners was the marriage of Mr. Hessey to Miss Kate Falkner, of Bath. The Fleet Street

house was given up to them, John living with them for a time and then going into lodgings. He loved the country though his lot was cast in the town, and it was a great happiness to him when he took up for a short time his abode at Hampstead

at a small neat Inn called “ the Spaniards.” It is a very pleasant place on the Brow of the Heath. I keep a Volume of Spencer’s *Faerie Queen* there for my recreation when I am disposed to read. You can’t think how pleasant it seems to me to go there after so long a confinement to London. I walk both Morning and Evening and the Distance is at least 5 miles from Fleet Street.

(To be concluded)

THE PROSPECT IN THE HUMANITIES *

By JOHN SWINNERTON PHILLIMORE

WHAT are the Humanities?—or, to substitute a sharper line for that delicate stippling plural, what is Humanity? One recalls a chapter of Aulus Gellius in which it is explained that “for those who made Latin words and those who used them correctly, *humanitas* means not a general kindness and benevolence (*φιλανθρωπία*) but *παιδεία*, education or instruction in the good subjects.” For example, Varro’s sentence “Praxiteles, whose name is familiar to any one that has any humanities . . .” “Who was Praxiteles?” is a question that reflects on the questioner: “*Whom not to know argues thyself unknown.*” A neat shibboleth. For that was a mere bravado in Charles Lamb to claim that one

Very well thro’ life may go
And never hear of Doctor Blow.

One would go all the better for not having to endure the flouts and scorns of the musicians. Certainly no civilised conversation is possible where many such questions are permitted. I remember, years ago, at Oxford, it caused quite a shock when a Magdalen undergraduate said in conversation “Who’s Plato?” The query was put in all simplicity, but people felt that the man had gone too far. Again, when at a small philosophical coterie in London, a distinguished scientific member hearing the word *Pascal*, leaned over to Wilfrid Ward (who sat next him) and asked “Who is Pascal?”—that proved the questioner to be weak in Humanities, though, of course, there was (and is) nothing to prevent his prophesying on Divinity in the Sunday papers. Then we might bring up the only enlightened remark remembered to have been made by any member of the House of Hanover: “Is he a gentleman? Does he know Greek?” Another rough and ready test: still, the boorish prince did perceive in one sort of his British subjects a difference of mental texture, which he obscurely referred to their education. Because their studies had not been merely technical and professional, their conversation had another quality.

You observe that these approach close in upon a quiet central commonplace:

The proper study of mankind is man.

* The Council of Bedford College in the University of London arranged a course of Lectures on “The World of To-morrow.” To that course I was invited to contribute under the title “The Prospect in the Humanities.” This article is a revise of the lecture delivered on March 21st, 1924.

Apropos of which I would invite your subscriptions to a dictum of the late Sir Walter Raleigh's : " There is only one Arts subject—History : all the rest, languages, literature and philosophy are branches of it." A good doctrine, and none the worse for gently disqualifying so many of the persons who write so-called history books. Take an historian like York Powell, or Herbert Fisher, and place him in any part of the occidental world at any point of time during the past three or four thousand years : he is able to adjust his mind ; he knows what they are doing, thinking, reading. He is hardly more of a stranger in Ephesus, in Athens, at the Court of Constantine, of Charlemagne, of Lorenzo de Medici, than he would be at Wembley. He can think and feel through the medium of more than one language, in more than one age. Of course if your modest ambition be merely to write a Universal History for office-boys, this does not matter. From the age when the monuments of mankind consist of a few bones and stones to the middle of the nineteenth century, can one imagine in all that interspace, any historical setting in which Mr. H. G. Wells would not look a little odd ? Perhaps that is why he is so busy projecting futurities where he would be more in the picture.

" Has he heard of Praxiteles ? " The point of the test is not that he should be an expert in the technicalities of sculpture, but that he should be able to understand what the experts are talking about and see the interest of it : not like the savage at the dinner who said " This doesn't amuse me—I shall get drunk." He may be a smatterer, yet he and the expert are mutually necessary ; each ought to respect the other. Only he can explain and justify the specialist to the outsider. A certain appreciation and enjoyment of Literature and Fine Art, an admission to the vestibule of learning, if not to the inner chambers, not merely serves for private pleasure but performs a public utility. And the experts are sometimes " peevish and sneery " in recognising it.

But you may cut a long story short by saying (what is the truth) that few words are less altered in meaning than Humanity since Cicero : he and Petrarch and Erasmus and W. P. Ker all understood the same thing by it. Very well, let it be agreed what we are to prophesy about—an unorthodox prelude to the ecstasy. Base is the slave that defines. But alas we poor Arts Faculty men make sorry prophets. How humbly do we envy our scientific colleagues their joyous plunges into philosophy and the soaring freedom of their speculations ! *A thousand years in Thy sight*, said the Psalmist ; and we often find the scientists gracefully confused with the Almighty. How fast their millenniums fly ! Let a skull of interesting antiquity be unearthed, and listen to the cries that go up. Ten thousand years ! A hundred thousand years ! A million years :—Any advance on one million years ? A million years I'm bid—Going. Going. . . . The merry auction goes with such enthusiasm that you would guess the innocent cranium was a new apple of discord, secretly inscribed with a more modern motto "*To the highest bidder.*" We cannot do that. . . . Our prophecies are but tame calculations of probability : So you must be merciful if, assuming for our

purposes that Greek and Latin are the essential core of Humanity, since in them tradition and continuity are incarnate, I proceed to survey some hopes and fears for the well-being of this deposit in the immediate future.

I have not had the advantage of hearing my predecessors in this series, but the syllabus of the lectures seems to suggest, or even to suppose, a dogma of progress. It seems therefore necessary to enter a caution. Men of letters and artists have never bowed the knee to the great eighteenth century placitum of continual human progress. Least of all, we now who have seen a ghost. We have lived through a decennium in which there has been felt, and there may still be felt—with a cold shudder—the plain pointblank possibility, undreamed of for centuries, of the crippling, the senescence, the extinction of civilisation, as the subtle, restless, fanatical enemies of Europe exploit and develop the cracks and strains caused by the Great War. And then, bating the cataclasms, there are evidently ups and downs. It is generally evident that Mr. Drinkwater is not as good a poet as Aeschylus, nor Mr. Epstein superior to Praxiteles—of whom you have all heard. Progress must, at the utmost, be restricted to mean the multiplication of diversities and the facilitation of minor achievement. The small fry are bigger than they used to be ; and there are more of them. You can make better anthologies of contemporary verse now than in the age of Byron, Keats and Shelley. But some would go much further than that. Suppose you dared to say that you saw here and now in process a general decline in literature and art ? Naturally of course some nimble cockerel of the Press would up and crow “ We have heard that before. Every age in turn proclaims itself for degenerate. It means nothing more than the elderly shrinkage of individual minds.” So he has read in his *What Every Journalist Should Know, with 12 quotations (3 in Latin) for leader-writers*. (25 pp. Splutter & Tootle, London, 1919). But it is not so. Though many nations, ancient and modern, have at periods been conscious of moral degeneracy and reduced efficiency—periods for the invention or the melancholy reiteration of that famous sentence “ we cannot bear either our vices or the cure of them ”—can you produce an instance of heralding in advance a coming improvement in art and literature ? Again and again in past history there are moments when people are aware of having taken a long step forward. To Thucydides’ generation all Greek achievement prior to the Persian wars seemed petty and prehistoric ; to Tacitus and his friends in their youthful student enthusiasm the prose of the Republic was antiquated, and Cicero “ only beginning to be readable in his latest works.” Our own Augustans were fully aware that they were newly emerging into civilised accomplishment. But does any of them ever think of saying that the succeeding age would better their achievements ? Has any poet ever sung that others were going to arise who should beat him at poetry ? Any generation ever said that, as we write better than our fathers, so our sons will outwrite us ? Any scholar ever believed that our penetration of antiquity gets mechanically intenser from age to age ? One would like to hear Mr. Housman’s opinion on the point.

But I must come down to my last. *Ne sutor supra* : it may be objected that a mere scholar has no title to talk about literature. And certainly we whose business and profession are learning, cannot be too humble when we consider how highly valued and honoured is its opposite. However, a modest plea may be preferred. Though learning be only an ugly sister—perhaps only a poor relation—in the house of literature, she shares the family fortunes. And since our Europe became fully articulate in Sicily and Attica, never has a great age of literature not been also a great age of scholarship—with one historic exception, the Elizabethan age in England. But what happened then ? The two movements began with happy promise, side by side, until the calamity came ; after which, literature survived and flourished, though with a certain violent wrench in its career ; scholarship perished with the ravaging of its patrimony by the Tudors and their creatures, only to reappear long after due time ; so that in some lights Milton presents the profile of a Cinquecentist.

This case may teach us, if the lesson were still necessary, that learning is at the mercy of circumstances. Like the human infant, it requires feeding and protecting, whilst literature is like the young of a wild animal, soon able to fend for itself. Revolutions and catastrophes may stimulate literature. But any great disturbance in the body politic is bound to react unfavourably on learning. Destroy your libraries—and the poet will ask no more than a pen and a sheet of paper to begin stocking them anew. But the scholar ? His material and his tools alike represent a long accumulated capital, impossible to substitute ; he is perforce a citizen of the place where these things are to be had. The travelling poet may be an adventurer, but the travelling scholar is an emigrant workman.

Let us then (without derogation from the dignity of prophesying) consider, in a rough survey, the conditions which appear to be immediately in store for learning.

If I put *political* conditions first, you must understand me not to refer to the labels by which our Parliamentary parties are so careful to distinguish themselves in the pursuit of office. Speaking with regard to learning, the politicians we have to fear are domestic : one species of parasites begotten by a community, who having themselves no trade or no special skill at their trade, exploit the association of human beings. This kind infests education. Their art is to provoke and manage minor herd-movements in that region, which trample and level in abasement every vital growth. Since they became prevalent, the very name of education has grown suspect to anyone that cares for the integrity of reading and learning. These professional procurers of the “ tender connexion ” between Master and Disciple are called by the dreadful name of Educationists. Some have figured Hell as an unending railway journey *tête-à-tête* with an Educationist. Happily, you will say, the term is most commonly found in obituary notices. Do not be beguiled. They are not a dying race ; and it would be hard to name any greater peril to scholarship than the presence of these commercials in the sanctuary. When you add to these the President

Boomers, the bureaucrats, who may be themselves Educationists, thinly disguised and engined with superior cunning, and the sloppy flatterers of the multitude—who are these last? You shall have an example: an eminent politician announced recently that ninety per cent. of the population of Scotland was fit to receive University education. Convert the proposition and you will perceive that this pundit's standard of University education is that which ninety per cent. of the people can assimilate. And this in a country which has for a century been endeavouring to live down the old reproach that what Scotland called Universities would be called High Schools anywhere else!

The growth of parasite "educationists"—greatly fostered in Scotland by an unfortunate provision of the Act of 1918—must be ranked first among discouraging circumstances: for one must surely regard the "educationist" as so far human as to take precedence of what are called economic factors. These also make a dark outlook for us. If anyone had been slow to believe how learning may be affected by merely material conditions the war afforded another convincing lesson. Fifteen centuries ago papyrus yielded to parchment, the roll was transformed into the *codex*, in obedience to economic factors. We had all heard of that: an immense event in history, and undeniable; but there are plenty of things which none can deny but few can realise. But with what palpable actuality was that revolution brought home to our minds, when, during the war, we saw the mean white trash that is now called paper grow scarce, and we heard of old country-house libraries pulped by the ton in order that Government reports might not be stinted, or newspapers, apparently purveyed by automatons for mental defectives, might not flap less amply. Many stereotyped plates were melted down for ammunition; among other victims, Jowett's translation of Plato. So hardly can the arts escape from subjection to the basest material necessities. The present enormous cost of printing, binding, etc., acts severely in restriction of scholarship. The work of English savants is at this moment going to Breslau, to Rome—God knows where—to escape from the British working man and to get printed. Bookbinding is done in France for English libraries. Scholars used to blush at the reproach that Markland's *Silvae*, one of the glories of English Latinism, came out with a German imprint. Who detects the dawn of a blush on the cheek of a Trades Union? Until some guild sense of pride in their craft arises to compete with the sole present motive, that of self-defence against capitalism, there is little hope of improvement here. And yet this might be supposed a more hopeful quarter than some: for by the nature of the case, a small co-operative enterprise, animated by the honour of craftsmanship, has more chance here than in most other trades.

Capital and Patronage, in some form or other, have always been indispensable for Learning no less than for Science. Where are we to look for either an enlightened central government or rich men with liberal minds? I know a great commercial city where for one wealthy man who will finance an important but naturally (unless in the very long run) unremunerative

publication—such as the catalogue of a museum—you will find three that will vie with each other in the sumptuous cataloguing of their private picture collections. Before such pride let us humble ourselves. Nobody grudges Macaenas his pound of butter. Who would not gladly compound for the most shamelessly adulatory preface if the plutocrat's vanity could thereby be harnessed to some goodly purpose? Cannot some obsequious moralist teach them that gratitude lends a fine flavour to adulation? Well, well: you must take what millionaires you find, and make the best you can of them; but may one not—without incurring the reproach of wanting the moon—sometimes allow a little sigh to escape . . . not for a Herodes Atticus (that would be asking too much) . . . but for a Trimalchio? A much more amusing and humane type. Set in contrast with your Carnegies, and Northcliffes, give me Trimalchio every time!

So far, one might collect that if the fortunes of culture depended upon us in this country the prospect would be none too bright. But they do not; less than ever, perhaps, though I say it with regret. That unhappy accident called the Reformation, which nipped the Renaissance in the bud, delayed its development by a century in England and for two centuries kept Scotland plunged in darkness, left us with a slight chronic eccentricity to the general movement of Learning. How symbolic was that funny way of pronouncing Latin which the Elizabethans coined! It is unpleasant to admit that ill with us may nevertheless be well for the cause of learning; for cosmopolitan consolations have a bitter aftertaste. However, with a patriotic sigh, let us turn as citizens of the world for comfort to the thought that in other countries the motto

antiquam exquirite matrem

is a star in the ascendant.

We must ask where? and why? and the names of the two nations will inevitably entail certain thoughts on the amities or affinities of learning with certain forms of political organisation.

The great age of English scholarship was just before the decay of aristocracy set in. Some have maintained that, among all forms, an aristocracy makes the best steward of national culture and tradition. And certainly the Humanities can, up to a point, easily agree with that polite idolatry of its own spirit, ritual and convention which an aristocracy establishes. But from aristocracy into plutocracy is a facile descent, not to be re-climbed; and we are learning that an industrial, financial plutocracy is the worst for that stewardship. But we must also be prepared to allow that in certain—the finest—of its ideals, the only true representative of a nation is a Person. . . . The nation has a collective personality which can never survive in the excretions of a Parliamentary machine. Just what is most interesting and essential is missing—like a verb with no subject. Of course aristocracies and plutocracies do not like a personality. But look at Mussolini: was it not essentially *italianità* in the Duce to discern that, in order to rally his country out of the degenerate, tainted langour into which she had sunk under a Parliament (in which five out

of six deputies were lawyers), the national education must be firmly replanted in the traditional disciplines? We have to thank President Coolidge for a pronouncement in favour of Latin, in its way perhaps even more remarkable as coming from the chief of a nation so mixed in blood as the United States : but here it is the voice of exhortation, not of authority. However, welcome as these are, an even greater and more notable encouragement comes to us from France. This may seem, at the first blush, to contradict what I said just now about monarchy (under whatever name) as the only adequate representative of the cultured ideals of a nation. It is indeed a paradox : but the fact is that this function of the monarchy in France, long and brilliantly fulfilled, so integrally incorporated itself in the French spirit of tradition, that whatever forms of Government have succeeded each other there since the Revolution, none has failed to assert and practise the doctrine that it appertains to the State to favour, encourage and adopt all that makes for dignity and magnificence. This is the good side of a centralisation which doubtless has also its reverse. But there it is. The French Republic entertains Periclean or Augustan ideas ; and from the age of Louis XIV there still survives a certain grand manner in administration and public service, which (*pace* the Action Française) has not been seriously vitiated by Parliamentarism. And now to this larger deeper personality of France, which has not failed to express itself through such institutions as were to hand, is owing the important classical revival that has rejoiced the friends of the Humanities all over the world. With the particular details of the reform we need not here concern ourselves ; but the nature and origin of this revival are most interesting. It is a reaction. I shall not insult your intelligence by supposing that you think the worse of it for that. Recovery from sickness is reaction ; repentance for error is reaction. Reaction implies a lesson learned by experience : the rejection of an experiment that has failed. But look from what quarter the agitation has sprung which has now restored the traditional disciplines to their primacy in education. This is the interesting point. Not from scholars who, like other people, are apt to praise their own wares ; but whose praises are for that reason heavily discounted. No : it came from bodies like the Chambers of Commerce in the great cities and throughout the country ; from the Comité des Forges, whose complaint was that the youth of France were no longer learning to think or to write accurately. And the complaint was seconded by many of the great masters of French literature. Indeed, I am assured by Mons. Em-Hinzelin—patriot, poet and publicist, and who, as editor of *La Marche de France*, conducted an extensive inquiry into the question—that he satisfied himself that the only opposition to Mons. Bérard's reform was vested in a little band of academic doctrinaires. In general, the case was found proved. The fruits of the ramshackle programmes, formulated twenty years ago out of the spirit of the corrupt and sterile eighties and nineties, had been given time to mature.

The proof was in the tasting : and they were judged degenerate, loose and poor in quality. So when France pulled herself together and with

systematic energy set to work repairing the terrible losses incurred in the war, an educational reform was an important part of the national reformation. But let us suppose that hereditary Latinism makes the classics exclusively necessary to French culture,—specially, perhaps, but not exclusively: for we must not forget that when the Germans began collecting their senses after the Napoleonic knock-out, they chose the same instrument and based their construction on classics. The reform in France is the result of long and close discussion and the *Decree* of 1923, however autocratic the term may sound, is essentially representative still. Yet M. Bérard's decree*, prompted and demanded though it was by the public opinion in competent quarters, was still an official act; and in this respect you may find it less interesting than another phenomenon of recovery in France. I mean the inception, the energies, the already remarkable achievement in publishing. To Mussolini's reform there has corresponded in Italy the vigorous output of classical texts from the firm of Paravia (Turin). And beside Mons. Bérard we must now name the *Association Guillaume Budé*. Called after the celebrated scholar, whom in his Latin guise of Budaeus we know from the correspondence of More and Erasmus, and who has recently been made by M. Plattard a central figure for a new study of the Classical Renaissance in France the Association was founded in 1917 for the purpose of publishing texts and translations of Greek and Latin authors—besides commentaries on them, and other studies relating to classical antiquity. Last year the Association received recognition as an "establishment of public utility," and it now enjoys the support of many great institutions such as the Academy and the Bank of France. It seeks and welcomes foreign adhesions and sympathies. Its publications by their number (in its short existence the Budé has already put out half the total number of texts achieved by the Clarendon Press in the thirty years' course of the Oxford Classical Texts), by their variety, by their editorial and typographical excellence are a worthy monument of French scholarship. The direction of the enterprise has large views. Julian, Callimachus and Seneca were never admitted into the Oxford series. (For want of readers, or of editors?) They are here with Homer, Plato, Lucretius. Though it may be long before we are enfranchised from the Teubner monopoly, French savants have already shown that the grandeur of design which in the past inspired the Delphin and the Didot series is still alive; and that from all over the country and from every branch of Higher Education, willing and qualified editors can be recruited. This is no small matter for congratulation to them, and of reproach to us: and we might add that the comprehensiveness of the directors gives certain very piquant contrasts: as when a distinguished Socialist Deputy, who is also a Hellenist, is found cheek by jowl beside Mons. Charles Maurras between a pair of covers, as editor and commentator respectively of St. Basil. One could imagine Dr. Gilbert Murray editing a text and Lord Birkenhead writing a pugnacious preface. But where is the publisher?

* It has been rescinded by the new batch of politicians (1925).

Can we find any comfort for ourselves in a French example and precedent? Well, the interchange of ideas and fashions between our two countries is and has always been lively and momentous. The scum of the Channel takes not many hours to float from shore to shore. If we judge by comparing *L'Illustration* with certain English picture-papers, we shall find that four or five weeks is the period of incubation for a French germ on this side. Queen Elizabeth, a shrewd politician, is reported to have said that England follows France at fifty years' distance; and if ever France came to be destroyed, just that long would be our reprieve. That is high politics. For the passage of ideas, perhaps, thirty to forty years is the period. The vogue of Renan, the Religion of Science movement—all that is now petering out (behind clouds of incense and accumulations of flowers) with M. Anatole France, is here still in force. We are still deep in the ramshackle era induced by Teacher-politics: One subject is as good as another, because, if not, it might imply that one teacher is not as good as another, or one pupil as good as another—which would be most undemocratic and perhaps actually displeasing to Lord Haldane . . . Besides, classics are the diet of privileged classes . . .

All this kind of thing they listened to thirty years ago in France. One bugbear was promenaded there that would never make any flesh creep in England: "the Classics had a Clerical tendency." That terror does not touch us; but it is worth noting by the way a curious particularity of our own. A mystical persuasion (dating from our ever-glorious Revolution) warns us that if we begin to read Latin of any later date than Tacitus—always excepting Claudian, who has Gibbon's imprimatur and who pastiched a style of four centuries earlier—we are subtly but surely tampering with the XXXIX Articles and perhaps endangering the essentials of an English gentleman. A very interesting essay might be written on the moral and political implications of Ciceronianism.

But granted that what France says to-day, England will, likely enough, be saying in thirty years' time, can the Humanities subsist amongst us merely on the hopes of a thirty years' reversion? Would not the poor humanist be rather like the donkey on whom the man tried a new and thrifty diet of Nothing? I should be sorry to leave you the impression that there was no hope for the Humanities with us save an eventual repercussion from abroad. One circumstance gives a hope of native recovery.

When the Prime Minister's Committee on Classics (in 1916, if I remember rightly) deliberated on the present position, they were able to report at least one comforting novelty. Although the tradition of the Humanities was very weak in schools such as Harrow, which are directly amenable to the passing fashions of the plutocracy, a remarkable compensation was appearing in another quarter. The Northern English Universities had succeeded—so it appeared in evidence—in awakening and meeting a demand for Greek and Latin among working men.

This demand sprang from genuine curiosity and an honest desire for intellectual power. It may be a somewhat confused, instinctive movement,

but it takes a right direction ; and we should make a very great mistake if we looked coldly on the aspirations of the W.E.A. after learning. True, a beginning must be made with diluted washes of philosophy, bleared generalities of history, very faint echoes of the beauties of ancient literature. But the Oxford student who sang, forty years ago, in the person of an Extension Lecturer

I represent throughout the land
The secondrate at secondhand

took short and narrow views, or, as the new jargon goes, had not vision. He did not look beyond an immediate, rather depressing, spectacle of an ugly hall half-filled with eccentric, perhaps fanatical, vague-minded persons. These are "the subtle, foggy, hazy, mystical creatures—well up to the latest *Spectator* cant." The Pacifist, the incipient or chronic Esperantist, the born or trained dupe of any shoddy delusion in a country where Nonsense is as sacred as ape or crocodile in ancient Egypt—we must not be too hard on the witty civilised don who saw them (perhaps only in his mind's eye) and drew closer to his study fireside. Yet, although in such an audience hardly two or three feel the genuine disinterested curiosity of the brain-craftsman—which the Greeks, strange people, called Philosophy—these may have sons, friends, dependants in some sort on their influence, who, thanks to them, will approach fountainheads from which they were not privileged to drink. Labouring people are at present obsessed with economic questions (small wonder, perhaps) to a degree that hardly allows any other intellectual curiosities to get above ground. But that will not always be so. The efforts of the W.E.A. are directed to enlarging the scope of study. More people get the chance of hearing of Praxiteles.

This leads us back into the region of politics. Not only in the work of popularising and diluting, but in the higher ranges also, I am not without confidence that we shall find the powers-that-be* more sympathetic than the powers-that-were.

Would you rather try and explain the principle that public money ought to be spent τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα, in support of arts and letters, to a Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer or to a politician who had been through the routine of Tripos or Classical Mods and Greats? Perhaps you would have to translate the Greek words in the former case ; in the latter case translation would be taken as an insult, but . . . has much been done to apply them? I had rather preach to Mr. Snowden that to support the British Schools of Athens and Rome, for example, is an expenditure that repays itself richly in prestige. Both France and Germany have long realised that there are other and subtler forms of prestige than the military and commercial and financial. Now the British Academy has actually found it easier to get the notion that it deserves endowment for its lexicographical enterprises, into a Labour minister's head than into that of an old politician (even with a scholar's education), let alone into that of [a

* No : once more the powers-that-might-be. But my argument is unaffected.

millionaire superman. Who knows? It may be reserved for a Socialist minister to realise the conception of the State as an impersonal Pericles or Augustus and rise to the idea of public patronage and national munificence—Economists need not be alarmed: contemptibly small sums are in question, a mere bagatelle, not the price of a Cabinet Minister.

verum illi domino tu quoque divitiae.

To this quarter we must look, for nowadays great private fortunes are apt to be coarsely or meanly spent. The latest economic revolution (a pleasant euphemism) has thrown the balance of wealth into illiberal hands. It is almost the limit of possibility if the dealers can even teach the new Robber Barons and Baronets to collect something—pictures, etchings, china. A first step: but it is a long way from the skilled avarice of the collector to the serviceable vanity of a patron; and even of patrons, how few care to lay out money without a direct return in display? *Vendilo ad un lord archeologo inglese*, said the Italian poet, bitterly. It is a fine thing, no doubt, to dig up Egyptian kings, and a service to knowledge; but would that there were some Maecenas in sight who would go to a University or an Academy and say: "I know there are great difficulties in publishing learned works at present. Allow me to offer you this trifling £20,000 as a fund to facilitate the issue of books which by their nature, in the interest of posterity, require to be subsidised." There are such people in France. I happen to have before me Edouard Galletier's excellent work on Roman Funerary Poetry, with an interior label to say *imprimé avec le concours du Fonds Alphonse Peyrat*. Where are our Alphonse Peyrats? A similar liberality in an American lady has enabled two Harvard scholars to publish a valuable index verborum to the works of Suetonius. In this country the money would much more likely be devoted to providing footwarmers for moulting parrots.

In conclusion. It is hardly doubtful that the wick will somehow be kept burning. The mere motive of emulation will save us from the entire dereliction of provinces of culture in which sister nations are excelling and gaining fresh prestige. So far as popularisation goes, there will be no difficulty; but there is great danger that teacher-politicians will fail to recognise the value of expert studies which give them umbrage and of which their very ignorance seems to themselves a title and a guarantee of good sense. How can they be taught that Research requires fostering and patronage? What appeal can be made to them? Have they an imagination to be kindled? If we tell them that from what looked like the most dingy and abstruse of specialising fifty, or even twenty years ago, are now proceeding discoveries which rearrange all our views of the past? The explorers of Etruscan and Hittite monuments would have been slighted as the dreariest of dryasdusts by the waggish papers of a generation since. But what marvellous combinations in the jigsaw of ancient history they are making! How the coherence of the pattern declares itself! How far reaching a result, when Atreus, emerging from the penumbra of legend,

takes his place on the stage of history! Sir Arthur Evans is prudently checking his entrance, but only to make it more effective. We shall read our *Oresteia* not in the rather uncouth and distorting light of comparative religionism, but as a literature expressing the old deep-seated rage of racial animus: as though Shakespeare's Histories had been written by an Irishman or a Hindu, with wit to invent, and the will to believe, all monstrous evil of the alien dominant . . . This seems to come perilously near the prophetic tone that I disclaimed. However, there is not time to say everything in an hour, but I want to indicate some things that, if time permitted, I would have liked to develop. In the particular detail of diplomatic relations between different provinces of knowledge, two things must be said. The jealousy between Humanities and Science is happily past. It is only a survival-type of Victorian scientist who is inimical to classical studies. The change has been remarkable. Having regard merely to the disciplinary propaedeutic values, the Medical Faculties of the Scottish Universities have repeatedly, and with all but unanimity, demanded Latin. It remains to be seen whether the politicians can defeat them.

Secondly, a much better understanding has been reached with the Modern Languages interest. But the classical interest must be ready to prepare students for these schools; we must lose some of our best men to them cheerfully—such as Professor Eccles and Professor Gordon—not esteeming these as lost vocations but as colonists; in the confidence that the old wisdom will be justified not least by these amongst her children. To them rather than to classical scholars it belongs to assert against factious and tendentious commercialisms, “You are charlatans if you pretend to understand French, Italian, or English without Latin; and your teaching is a shoddy degradation of University standards.”

And finally in the most general view: it needs to be announced boldly that our studies are at this time alive with the invigorating results of research. Young students need not fear that they are committing themselves to an exhausted field. My conclusion shall be a summary illustration of the claim that, if ever there was a risk of the classics being reduced to a stale routine, the time is not now. We live at a most interesting moment in these studies. The giant delusions of the last century have retreated. The German aptitude for totally misconceiving a great issue whilst exploring and recording details with remarkable accuracy has been typically exposed in the Homeric Question. The great Sun-Myth age is no more. And we are promised now a brilliant convergence in various lines of research that will complete our disillusion. In another generation it may be acquired fact, not merely plausible speculation, that all our culture had one common focus from which it spread north and westwards. The idea that in any article of civilisation North Europe has ever originated anything, may be as thoroughly exploded as Wolf's theory; German mythology proved to be no more than a confused deformation and monstification of Mediterranean motifs colported through the forests. More discreet disciples of Wiener may have proved that half the German language was only

pidgin Latin and pidgin Byzantine. . . . What a tempting invitation—study classics and be in at the death of the great Teutonic Myth !

And lest anyone suppose that it is only in the anthropological, prehistoric, archæological parts of the front, that History = Humanity is alive and moving, one can cite from just the last few years, researches purely linguistic and literary which have renewed the classics with an inspiration. In Latin particularly Max Carcopino has wrought almost as great a revelation for Virgil as Victor Bérard did for Homer when he published *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*. Professor Lindsay invites us to hear the very tones in which Plautus' comedies were spoken (or sung). Begin to apply the lessons of Marouzeau and Barbelenet to the very stalest text and it will become new ground. They give us a transformed and surprising insight into the quality of language, as if we were suddenly furnished with a lens of new power to scan a picture with. And that interesting and original inquiry of Mr. Evans' into the laws of Alliteration has suggested to us an unsuspected clue whereby to analyse and taste the Latin poets in a sense undreamed by Munro and Conington. Both extensively and intensively, at every point, classical studies have been renewed. I refuse to believe that just at this moment we shall fall out of the ranks of Humanism and surrender to the Philistines.

ROBERT BROWNING

By EDWARD SHANKS

THE anticipatory Day of Judgment now being held upon the great Victorians resembles rather closely that once imagined by Mr. H. G. Wells, in which not the crimes but the shamefully comic weaknesses of mankind were to be the chief subject of enquiry. There is much to be said for this method of biographical revision. Tennyson was not, we feel, the impeccable compound of saint and hero which is reflected in the official life ; but it would not carry us much further if some devil's advocate were to attempt to represent him as a villain. Mr. Nicolson's discriminating and by no means unaffectionate humour is far more to the point.

But there is one Victorian figure which has not yet been subjected to this form of scrutiny and that, I think, because it is still something of a mystery. Robert Browning received indeed only in a restricted degree that canonisation which was so liberally bestowed on so many of his contemporaries. He was, by comparison, neglected in his early life. In his later years, his avowed admirers and propagandists were a rather solemn body of persons and the humours of their adoration did not escape the notice of the rest of the world.

Nor did the poet's own weaknesses go unobserved. With him, particularly in his last period, the contrast between the triviality of man and the greatness of his pretensions was always in evidence, in touches precisely to the taste of Mr. Lytton Strachey and Mr. Harold Nicolson. He was a great poet, writing great and largely incomprehensible poems. While he was still alive, there was a Browning Society, studying *Sordello* and establishing little depots of explanation, in a manner reminiscent of preparations for a motor-trip across the Sahara. Meanwhile Robert Browning was periodically visible in London society, small, restless, vivacious, noted for his unfailingly immaculate lemon yellow gloves, an indefatigable caller and diner-out, an immense talker at dinner-tables. Disraeli's one reference to him (though, of course, in matters of poetry, Disraeli, like Browning's father, was a man of the eighteenth century) is a somewhat irritable mention of having met somewhere "a talkative poet." A lady who saw him at a party enquired who was "that too exuberant financier." His exuberance and his talkativeness, something in his manner of dress, which was neither negligent nor elegant, but rather to be described as prosperous, gave rise to many suspicions. He was said to be a Jew, which may be supported by the peculiar interest in the Jews shown in all his work, and by that oriental profusion and confusion of odd pieces of remote learning, resembling, as Mr. Desmond MacCarthy once said, the rich jumble to be seen in the shop of an old-fashioned dealer in antiques. Some have even professed to trace in him the signs of negro blood, which is supported only, if at all,

by a family connection with the West Indies : there is certainly no evidence in his work of anything that could properly be called savage.

But the real mystery does not lie here. It lies in Browning's youth, by which I mean the period before, at the age of thirty-four, he married Elizabeth Barrett and during which he wrote a considerable portion of his best work. Now, if the growth of poetic legend is in itself an important thing, if it is good for us to have before us living pictures of poets at the vivid, turbulent age when genius and character are being formed, then there is something to be said for poets dying young. When they live to be old, the events of their most active and formative years tend to grow obscured. The records made of them are made by persons who knew them as old men. They themselves, consciously or unconsciously, influence the spirit of these records in a way a young man could not. And, especially in the last century, the eventual biography took a discreet and subdued form.

The result is that we know far less about the youth of Browning than we know about Keats or Shelley. We know, of course, many of the material and more or less indifferent events of his life. We know the conditions of his childhood, the famous story of his first introduction to the works of Shelley, and the circumstances in which he was dedicated to poetry. We know much about his travels, that he made a visit to St. Petersburg, about his friendships, his theatrical ambitions, his quarrel with Macready and so on. But what we know has a curious feeling of saplessness about it. One cannot help thinking that the author of those early poems, the man who by his good looks, his charm and energy made so deep an impression on all who met him, on men so diverse as Thackeray and Carlyle, the hero of the amazing rescue of Elizabeth Barrett from her "darkened room," must have had a more varied life than any that is shown in the records, must have passed through some adventures before that one exploit of which we do know. No doubt this feeling is responsible for the story that he passed some of his youth wandering with the gipsies ; but for this, so far as I know, there is no evidence whatever. Not long ago a volume was published which was to throw new light on his early years. Alas ! The new light consisted of an unconvincing argument that Browning was the real author of a well-known hymn and a very improbable identification of the subject of *Pauline*. The mystery remains.

It is, of course, very largely of Browning's own making. Throughout his life he insisted, in a curious and rather suspicious manner, on the dramatic character of his work—"poetry always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine." He is so anxious not to be misunderstood in this matter that he harps on it in the very titles of his books—*Dramatic Romances*, *Dramatic Lyrics*, *Men and Women*, *Dramatis Personæ*. He underlines it in *One Word More*, when he declares that for once he will speak in his own person :

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,

Speak from every mouth,—the speech, a poem.
 Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
 Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving :
 I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
 Karshish, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty.
 Let me speak this once in my true person,
 Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea,
 Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence :
 Pray you, look on these my men and women,
 Take and keep my fifty poems finished ;
 Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also !
 Poor the speech ; be how I speak, for all things.

This was not indeed the only time he spoke explicitly with his own voice. Again he addressed his wife, after her death, in the closing lines of the first section of *The Ring and the Book* ; and he wrote a sonnet to Edward Fitzgerald, which was certainly not “dramatic in principle.” But he glanced at the poet's dissociation from the experience he describes in *How it Strikes a Contemporary*, and there is almost a defiant affirmation of his principle in *House*, with the famous

“ *With this same key
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart,*” once more !
 Did Shakespeare ? If so, the less Shakespeare he !

I do not wish to labour this point unduly, but I think that in it we may perhaps find a certain clue to the tangle (and it is a tangle) of Browning's poetry. I do not mean that we can discover, or indeed that there exists to discover, any Dark Lady of his youth, his relations with whom will make all his lyrics fall into a comprehensible scheme of self-revelation. We know all we need to know about the great love of his life and I think it is comparatively easy to trace its influence on his poetry.

Besides, the relation between a poet's experience and the form it takes in his poetry is always a variable and bewildering one, as can be seen from the well-meant attempts of innumerable critics to assume that Shakespeare, in his sonnets, set down, however obscurely, a number of biographical facts. Goethe was the most directly autobiographical poet who ever lived, and said that all his works were fragments of a great confession ; but we need a great deal of explanation, and evidence from contemporaries, before we can understand his poems on the factual plane. A poet may touch the skirts of an experience in life, but live it whole in his imagination. He may feel another man's experience so vividly as to make it his own. But all true poetry is, under whatever disguises, the record of something which has happened in the heart.

And to every poet there come moments when the setting down, for all the world to read, of this inner history seems a kind of shameful exhibitionism. It is then that he adopts disguises and symbols or, if he is lucky, like Shakespeare, finds at hand a healthy theatre in which he can speak his heart through the mouths of other persons.

Browning was not so lucky : the theatre of his day was no place for a man of genius, even if he had the true dramatic gift. It is certain that, for whatever reason, he was not successful in the writing of plays and rarely managed to present his characters in the round. And this, I think, increases the suspicion aroused by his so sedulous insistence on the dramatic (that is to say, non-personal) quality of all his work. There was a contradiction in him. Within his heart an immensely strong instinct of reticence was at war with his natural exuberance of self-expression. He feared always that he might too much expose himself to the gaze of the public and to this fear, I believe, eventually most of his obscurity and strangeness may be traced. The labyrinth of his poetry is a labyrinth he made so that he might hide himself in it.

Again—I do not intend to suggest that there was in his life anything which, from an ordinary point of view, it was at all necessary that he should hide. His reticence was like the shyness of persons, especially young persons, who cannot bring themselves to show enthusiasm or affection in the presence of others. Or, more fantastically, it might be compared to the belief of the savage that a knowledge of his true name will give his enemy power over him. It was simply an element, but always a powerful and often a determining element in his nature. On the one side was his reluctance to give anyone a key that might unlock his heart, on the other the desire of that poet's heart for self-expression.

But, though he made the labyrinth to hide in, he did not quite succeed in hiding there. We are hardly likely, even by using this theory for purposes of the closest scrutiny, to find autobiographical details : he never spoke so plainly as his wife in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which misleading title, by the way, he himself imposed. It is not, for example, really worth while to enquire who was the original of *Pauline*, for any youthful poet might have made that out of a trifle or out of nothing. But we can to a certain extent trace the working of his inhibition and we shall find, I think, that he is at his best when it is least effective. You follow him round the labyrinth and on the way you find many curious and amusing and ingenious things, put there to entertain and delay you ; but from time to time, if you press on, round a corner you will catch a full sight of the poet himself. We need not de pise the “men and women, live or dead or fashioned by my fancy” ; but Browning himself when we can catch him is the greatest and most moving of them all.

Distinctions of this sort must not be pressed too far : it is enough if they seem to have a truth of a general sort. One might perhaps read something into the long suppression of *Pauline*, reprinted only in 1867 with a peculiarly anxious explanation of its non-personal character—“a sketch that, on reviewal, appears not altogether wide of some hint of the characteristic features of that particular *dramatis personæ* it would fain have reproduced.” *Sordello*, however, is a clearer matter. The poem is a sort of parallel to *Alastor*, an account of the development of a poetic soul. But Shelley, though his fable is so remote and mythological, intends the direct

expression of a personal experience and is not hard to understand. Browning declines from the crystalline air of mythology to the murk of history and involves himself in every complication of verbal obscurity and of local and temporal detail. *Sordello* is not himself a very interesting figure : he must depend to catch our attention on what of the poet has been put into him. Browning's first impulse was to put much of himself into *Sordello* : his second, a frantic impulse, was to conceal from any reader how much. The result is that baffling poem which numbs one in reading, so that by the time one reaches the end (if one ever does) one is too fatigued even to scratch below the repelling surface for a hidden meaning.

It is impossible to maintain that this work is anything but an artistic blunder. The charge is not that its subtleties demand concentration before the author's meaning can be obtained, it is that they frequently leave the profoundest concentration in doubt of it. And before Browning's declaration, some twenty years afterwards, that " the historical decoration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires," one is left agape. Let us take a passage at random :

Tush ! No mad mixing with the rout
Of haggard ribalds wandering about
The hot torch-lit wine-scented island-house
Where Friedrich holds his wickedest carouse,
Parading,—to the gay Palermitans,
Soft Messinese, dusk Sarascenic clans
Nuocera holds,—those tall grave dazzling Norse,
High-cheeked, lank-haired, toothed whiter than the morse,
Queens of the caves of jet stalactites,
He sent his barks to fetch through icy seas,
The blind night seas without a saving star,
And here in snowy birdskin robes they are,
Sordello !—here, mollitious alcoves gilt
Superb as Byzant domes that devils built !
—Ah, Byzant, there again ! no chance to go
Ever like august cheery Dandolo. . . .

Several lines and phrases leap direct and vivid to the eyes, but what a " background " for " the incidents in the development of a soul " ! This is simply a turmoil of short and choppy waves like those one sees where two currents meet. The hydrographer can see meaning in that confusion, the psychologist perhaps in this ; but this, for the reader, is simply poetry in process of being strangled. It must be remembered that, three years before he wrote *Sordello*, Browning, in *Strafford*, dealt, from full knowledge, with one of the less known episodes in the most intricate period of English history and wrote a drama which, whatever else may be said of it, is perfectly lucid. *Sordello* is not explicable save as the result of an acute mental conflict. Browning says in his exordium :

Confess now, poets know the dragnet's trick,
Catching the dead, if fate denies the quick.

Heaven knows what he has caught, but " fate " is an opposition in his own nature.

Few, if any, of his later poems rivalled the obscurity and confusion of *Sordello*. He found a way of yielding altogether to the inhibition without ceasing to write, a way which yet did not distinguish on the surface between those poems in which the inhibition ruled and those in which his true self emerged. His failure in the theatre closed one avenue to him, but he soon forced another and discovered in it the means to decided success. Poems like *Bishop Blougram's Apology* and *Andrea del Sarto* are not poems of the highest rank, are indeed only with difficulty to be reckoned as poems at all, but they are very interesting exhibitions of an acute and powerful intellect. Nor would it be reasonable, without further enquiry, to say that, if this be admitted, they should not have been written in verse. I will take a harder case than either of these. I will take that remarkable work, *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangan, Saviour of Society*. Here is a passage from the beginning of it :

First, how to make the matter plain, of course—
 What was the law by which I lived. Let's see :
 Ay, we must take one instant of my life
 Spent sitting by your side in this neat room :
 Watch well the way I use it, and don't laugh !
 Here's paper on the table, pen and ink :
 Give me the soiled bit, not the pretty rose !
 See, having sat an hour, I'm rested now,
 Therefore want work : and spy no better work
 For eye and hand and mind that guides them both,
 During this instant, than to draw my pen
 From Blot One—thus—up, up to blot Two—thus—
 Which I at last reach, thus, and here's my line
 Five inches long and tolerably straight :
 Better to draw than leave undrawn, I think,
 Fitter to do than let alone, I hold,
 Though better, fitter, by but one degree.
 Therefore it was that, rather than sit still
 Simply, my right-hand drew it while my left
 Pulled smooth and pinched my moustache to a point.

Poetry, this ? No, for it lacks the ring and the temperature of poetry. An adequate interpretation of the real motives of that ill-fated Emperor of the French ? No—for perhaps he himself did not know what they were. But, even as the Prince says of his drawing, it is better done than left undone, and this for the world at large as well as for him who did it. It is a curious and discerning essay upon certain possibilities of the human mind. The verse does undoubtedly give lightness, speed, concision and something of an epigrammatic and gnomic touch to the development of the argument, and if we do, as we must, admit that the argument is in itself interesting, then we need not trouble to defend the work against the charge of being an artistic blunder.

Much of Browning's poetry does consist of such attempts as this at the purely dramatic, at the interpretation of other minds, at the rendering of experiences not his own. It was when he made these attempts that he deserved Wilde's witticism that "Meredith was a prose Browning—and so was Browning." He took refuge from himself in such studies and in what can only be called "reciter's pieces." He gave us extraordinarily interesting essays on the minds and souls of Mr. Sludge and Bishop Blougram, of Andrea del Sarto and Fra Lippo Lippi. On a lower plane are such poems of his earlier and later years as may be exemplified by *Incident of the French Camp* and *Pheidippides*. All these are great works of literature, but they are not poetry in the sense in which Browning's best and most personal utterances are poetry.

I have said already that we know little of the intimate details of his life, but that of the most important of them all we know enough. Perhaps this too, if he could, he would have concealed from us. But his marriage with Elizabeth Barrett is a matter of history, sufficiently documented. It is a very remarkable incident. She was six years older than he, a confirmed invalid and in subjection to a ridiculously tyrannical father, and Browning's task was not merely to lend her something of his own strength but also to take on himself the responsibility of taking her from her life of invalidism. Is it fantastic to think that something of this is reflected in *The Ring and the Book*, in the story of the rescue of Pompilia from her brutal husband by Giuseppe Cagnosacchi?

For this poem seems to me to represent the watershed of Browning's poetic life, being, but for a few lyrics to which I shall refer later, the last in which it is possible to detect the breath of personal passion. After this he developed the reasoned monologue, that curious study in psychology which approaches so closely to a later form of novel. He writes a score or so of spirited pieces, like *Pheidippides*, which stir the blood. But, until his very last years, we do not get again anything comparable to *The Lost Mistress* or *The Last Ride Together* or *Saul*.

It was perhaps unconsciously but certainly in consonance with his general principle of confusing what is in fact the main issue that Browning rearranged the poems of his most vital period as they are to be found in his collected edition. *Men and Women* was, when it was first written, sufficiently homogeneous to have attached to it that beautiful dedication, *One Word More*, which I have already quoted. But later on Browning reduced it to thirteen poems, one of which is brought in from elsewhere. The rest, and all of them the most personal, are distributed between *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances*.

These, under varying degrees of disguise, are the real Browning. There are descriptive passages where the dramatic mask is obviously unnecessary to shelter even the most sensitive soul, and there are also lyrics in which the strength of the emotion seems to disdain the protection of the mask. Apart from the confusion caused by Browning's redistribution of all the shorter pieces in his volumes published up to and including

Men and Women, we have not often any definite information as to the dates of the individual poems. But we can take the three works, *Men and Women*, *Dramatis Personæ* and *The Ring and the Book* as being the central mass of his poetry and also as being that part of it which was inspired by Elizabeth Barrett. Or, to put it in another way, we can describe it as being what he wrote while his feeling for Elizabeth Barrett was sufficiently strong to overcome his peculiar instinct of reticence.

I have argued that before this, in that strangely mysterious young manhood of his, Browning must have had experiences all knowledge of which is denied to us. It is hard to believe, for example, that the author of *Pippa Passes* had kept himself so satisfactorily out of any kind of trouble as might be imagined by the reader of Mrs. Sutherland Orr's biography. There is much in this poem that is exaggerated and melodramatic, but there is also much that is as personal as an entry in a diary, and with the same stamp of vivid truth.

But it is in poems of a later date that this personal note is heard in full perfection, and when we hear it we hear the true Browning, no longer confined by an instinct of disguise, no longer obscure and involved, no longer grotesque, no longer intolerably learned. Everywhere, indeed, throughout his work any passage of description makes him simple and direct, sometimes to the damage of the dramatic convention he seeks to sustain. Pippa's opening soliloquy is a lovely poem which makes intermittent attempts, hardly more than perfunctory, to represent the peasant-girl who is supposed to speak. Take the first lines :

Day !
 Faster and more fast,
 O'er night's brim day boils at last,
 Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-ing's brim
 Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
 For not a froth-flake touched the rim
 Of yonder gap in the solid grey
 Of the eastern cloud, an hour away ;
 But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
 Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
 Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
 Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

It is not Pippa, nor does it seriously purport to be : it is pure Browning, the Browning who wrote *Home-thoughts from Abroad* and that queerly living poem *Meeting at Night* :

I
 The grey sea and the long black land ;
 And the yellow half-moon large and low ;
 And the startled little waves that leap
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
 And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

II

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
 And blue spurt of a lighted match,
 And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
 Than two hearts beating each to each !

I have quoted this poem because it is a rather unfamiliar example of Browning's power of description. The last lines are perhaps the "dramatic" part of it, but it is not for them that the poem exists. The subject of the poem is the night over the edge of land by the sea. And this power is always exhibiting itself and, even when the poet is striving to be most impersonal, it reveals his person. Sometimes it carries him away too far and intrudes itself : he does not always know how to place a picture in an emotional situation as so exquisitely he does in *The Lost Mistress* :

All's over then : does truth sound bitter
 As one at first believes ?
 Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
 About your cottage eaves !

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,
 I noticed that, to-day ;
 One day more bursts them open fully
 —You know the red turns grey.

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest ? . . .

Artistry can go no further than in the cunning, apparently careless arrangement of these lines.

And this is also, of course, one of the pieces which constitute the main problem of my present enquiry. It is a problem hardly to be resolved by any logical means : one can but make one's statements in seemingly dogmatic form and trust that they will suggest a certain way of looking at the poems. These pieces are not, so far as we know, founded directly on experiences in the world of fact, and they are not therefore, in that sense, personal, may indeed be regarded, as Browning wished them to be regarded, as dramatic. But I submit that there is a real difference in spirit between *The Lost Mistress*, *The Last Ride Together*, *A Lover's Quarrel*, and some dozens more of the same order, and such pieces, obviously dramatic, as *Count Gismond*. Let us contrast a couple of passages, first from *Count Gismond* :

This glads me most that I enjoyed
 The heart of joy, with my content
 In watching Gismond unalloyed
 By any doubt of the event.
 God took that on Him—I was bid
 Watch Gismond for my part : I did.

This is from *The Last Ride Together* :

My mistress bent that brow of hers ;
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
 When pity would be softening through,
 Fixed me a breathing-while or two
 With life or death in the balance : right !
 The blood replenished me again ;
 My last thought was at least not vain :
 I and my mistress, side by side
 Shall be together, breathe and ride,
 So, one day more am I deified.
 Who knows but the world may end to-night ?

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud
 All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed,
 By many benedictions—sun's
 And moon's and evening-star's at once—
 And so, you, looking and loving best,
 Conscious grew, your passion drew
 Cloud, sunset, moon-rise, star-shine too,
 Down on you, near and yet more near,
 Till flesh must fade for heaven was here !—
 Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear !
 Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

It would be waste of space to argue that this is a better piece than that with which I have contrasted it, for it is one of the loveliest and most triumphant poems in our language. What I do contend is that it is in a different order of feeling from the other. It has the ring of personal feeling and, though the event may be imaginary, yet the poet has made the experience his own, as he has not in *Bishop Blougram's Apology* or *Andrea del Sarto*, and it cannot therefore be considered a dramatic poem in the sense in which these poems are dramatic. I suggest further that, even so, a shyness imposed itself on the poet and prevented him from expressing his emotions directly. He instead allowed his imagination to play on them and he expressed their poignancy in visions of what might have been had they found a less happy response. This is the secret of his love-poems.

It may be that a taste, growing ever stronger and stronger, for personal poetry, for poetry that is, as it were, but an impassioned diary, has led me to exaggerate the extent of this element in Browning, and its importance. I would not be taken as underrating the other side of him, the subtle intellect, the immense powers of observation and construction. But I do think that these were largely developed as a screen for a lyricist who was afraid of himself.



THE POOL
Woodcut by L. BELLIN-CARTER

CORRESPONDENCE

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

(*To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY*)

SIR,—In July last your columns afforded eloquent testimony to the interest aroused by the consecration of the first part of the Liverpool Cathedral. Since then the constant stream of visitors, from home and abroad, has shown that this interest is neither ephemeral, nor confined to the Diocese of Liverpool.

Generous gifts received from different parts of England and from Overseas assure us that the completion of the next part of the Cathedral is regarded as a matter of national as well as of local concern. We therefore ask your permission to say that the Liverpool Cathedral Committee propose to commence operations on the Great Central Space and Western Transept in July next, but that towards the cost of these there remains to be collected during the seven years which will be employed on the building a sum of about £230,000 in addition to the funds already in hand.

An association called "Cathedral Builders" has been formed to promote public interest in the work, members of which are asked to subscribe not less than £1 1s. per annum (there is no maximum subscription), all of which will go to the Building Fund. They will receive special facilities for visiting the works and a quarterly illustrated bulletin showing the progress of the building, thus insuring their continued interest in its progress, and enabling them to enlist the support of others. (Fuller particulars may be obtained on application to "Cathedral Builders," the Cathedral, Liverpool.)

It is hoped that by joining "Cathedral Builders" and by gifts to the Hon. Treasurers at the Church House, Liverpool, many of your readers may contribute to a building which has been generally accepted as expressing the spiritual aspiration and artistic achievement of our generation in a way not unworthy to rank with the noblest work of previous ages.—Yours, etc.

The Cathedral,
Liverpool.

ALBERT LIVERPOOL.

DERBY, President Liverpool Cathedral Committee.

FREDERICK M. RADCLIFFE, Chairman
Liverpool Cathedral Executive Committee.

ENGLISH MADRIGAL VERSE

(*To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY*)

SIR,—I note with regret, in your May issue, that I inadvertently mentioned a university press as having published A. H. Bullen's privately printed edition of Campion's works. For "Clarendon" please read "Chiswick."—Yours, etc.

Nutbourne Manor,
Pulborough, Sussex.

HUGH M. BAKER.

DANCING AND THE POETS

(A Monsieur l'Éditeur du LONDON MERCURY)

MONSIEUR,—Dans votre numéro d'Octobre, 1924, se trouve un article sur "Dancing and the Poets," par J. St. Loe Strachey. L'auteur de cet article cite le poème de Flecker, "Pannyra of the Golden Heel," mais il n'indique pas que ce poème est une traduction littérale—et non une simple interprétation—du poème d'Albert Samain "Pannyre aux talons d'or" ("Aux flancs du vase").

Tout en reconnaissant la valeur poétique de la traduction, il serait tout juste de faire remarquer que cette "real passion for the dance" attribuée à Flecker appartient plutôt au poète français.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

University College of North Wales,

Bangor.

H. CARIOU.

[That is true : but Flecker wrote a quite original poem about Mme. Pavlova.—EDITOR.]

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

Correspondence from readers on all subjects of bibliographical interest is invited. Our Correspondent will, to the best of his ability, answer all queries addressed to him.

GENERAL NOTES

IN a recent issue—that for January, 1925—of the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* Mr. Frederick A. Pottle published an article in which he chronicled an extremely interesting bibliographical discovery—nothing less than an addition to the known writings of James Boswell. This was a contribution to the pamphlet war which was evoked by Foote's comedy of *The Minor*, which was produced in London in July, 1760. Boswell's pamphlet bore the cumbrous title of *Observations, Good or Bad, Stupid or Clever, Serious or Jocular, on Squire Foote's Dramatic Entertainment, entitled The Minor. By A Genius*. This was printed first of all in Edinburgh, in November, 1760, without publisher's name, and late in December of the same year J. Wilkie published a second edition in London. Mr. Pottle suggests that the Edinburgh edition was printed at the author's expense. From internal evidence Mr. Pottle suspected that this pamphlet was by Boswell, and his suspicion was confirmed by Professor Tinker's pointing out to him that in the portion of the Auchinleck Library sold at Sotheby's on June 23rd, 1893, there was a copy with this inscription in Boswell's hand :—" This was an idle performance and written inconsiderately, for I disapprove much of *The Minor* as having a profane and illiberal tendency." Another copy of the first edition was in the same sale, and there is a third in the New York Public Library. Beyond these Mr. Pottle has not been able to trace any examples of the first edition. No doubt (since all good Boswellians and Johnsonians will be conducting a search) more copies of the *Observations* will be discovered.

MESSRS. B. T. Batsford, of 94, High Holborn, London, are shortly to publish a work entitled *London Tradesmen's Cards of the XVIII Century*, by Mr. Ambrose Heal, illustrated with reproductions of more than a hundred typical examples. The book is to be a crown quarto, and the price will be £1 15s. to subscribers, and two guineas to those who buy it after publication. Many of these cards are of the greatest interest and beauty, as was demonstrated at an exhibition held during the past month by the First Edition Club, of 6, Little Russell Street, Bloomsbury. Here a large number of specimens was shown, and they demonstrated very clearly the progress of the tradesmen's cards from the time when the shop-sign—the *Dolphin*, the *Black Boy*, or what not—was the chief feature of the cards, to the time when the signs had been superseded by street numbers. The exhibits were arranged by trades, and I observed that, of all trades, that of fishing-tackle manufacture rejoiced in the oddest names ; among the fishing-tackle makers were a Herro and a Busick, and there was one with the curious name of Onesimus Ustonson. There were not only trade cards proper in the exhibition, but also bill-headings, and there was one series of bills, all of them made out for goods supplied to Edward Gibbon. Among these last was one for " One strong Parrot cage £0-12-0."

THERE now follows a further instalment of the bibliography of the first editions of Christopher Anstey's various writings.

XV

1795

The/Farmer's Daughter,/A Poetical Tale./[Ornament consisting of an undulating line]/By Christopher Anstey, Esq./[Ornament as before]/Bath :/Printed By S. Hazard, /For T. Cadell Junr. and Wm. Davies, (Successors to Mr. Cadell,)/in the Strand, London./M DCC XCV./

Quarto, consisting of two sheets of four leaves each, [A] and B, B being inserted between leaves [A₂] and [A₃]. An uncut copy measures 9½ by 7½ inches.

Pagination :—p.[1], half-title "[Ornament]/*The/Farmer's Daughter,/A Poetical Tale./[Ornament]/Price One Shilling and Six Pence.*" p.[2] blank. p.[3] title. p.[4] blank save for the words "Entered At Stationers Hall." p.[5] and [6] "To the Reader." pp.[7] and 8-16 text with "Finis." at the end. There are also ornaments on pp. [5], [7] and 16.

This melancholy tale of the death of a girl seduced by a soldier, is stated by the author in his note "To the Reader," to be founded on fact and to be versified in imitation of *Hannah More*. It is one of Anstey's weakest productions. As a sample the last stanza may be quoted :—

Alas ! she dropp'd, life's genial warmth
Congeal'd at ev'ry pore—
Death's iron hand her eyelids clos'd—
She slept to wake no more.

There is another issue (of which there is a copy in the British Museum) which has the "To the Reader" note all on p.[5] and p.[6] blank. Which issue is the earlier, I do not know.

XVI

1797

Britain's Genius ;/A Song :/To the Tune of "Come and listen to my Ditty,"—/Occasioned By The Late/Mutiny/On Board His Majesty's Ships/At The Nore./[Ornament]/By C. A. Esq./[Ornament]/Bath : Printed By S. Hazard ;/For T. Cadell, Junr. And W. Davies,/(Successors To Mr. Cadell)/In The Strand, London./M DCC XCVII./

Octavo. A cut copy (but with wide margins) in the British Museum measures 7½ by 4½ inches.

The Ornaments on the title-page are undulating lines.

Signatures :—Eight leaves only, the fourth and fifth being signed A₃ and A₄. If this is not a mistake, the half-title leaf at the beginning is probably A₈ folded back.

It would be necessary to see an unbound copy to settle this point.

Pagination :—p.[1] half-title, "*Britain's Genius ;/A Song./[Ornament]/Price Six-pence./[Entered at Stationers Hall.]*". p.[2] blank. p.[3] title. p.[4] blank. p.[5] "To the Reader," dated "June, 1797." p.[6] blank. pp.[7] and 8-15 text, with triple rule at the head and ornament (bearing word "Finis.") at end. p.[16] blank.

This was Anstey's last publication in English verse. It is a production of his literary dotage and entirely without merit. To quote from it would be fruitless.

I hope to complete this bibliography of Anstey next month.

NOTES ON SALES

THE Royal Society's books were, in spite of all protests, sold by auction on May 4th at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms, and the day's sale realised the extraordinarily high total of over £14,700. Nearly half of this total—£6,800 to be exact—was paid by Dr. Rosenbach for one volume, the only known copy of John Eliot's translation into the Massachusetts Indian language of Richard Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, which translation was printed at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1664, by Samuel Green. This was, by a very big margin, the highest price of the day, and beyond this book Dr. Rosenbach bought comparatively little. One of the departments in which the collection was richest was the Lutheran tracts, and these brought quite good, though not sensational, prices. One volume of 38 tracts fetched £100. Messrs. Quaritch bought the two Chaucers—Caxton's second edition, 1484, for £660, and Pynson's edition of 1490 for £560; neither book was quite complete. Cicero's *De Officiis et Paradoxa*, printed on vellum by Schoeffer at Mainz in 1466, brought £1,000; and the first edition, printed at Florence in 1488, of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* sold for £400. I make no comment here upon the Royal Society's action, since the view of this journal was clearly expressed last month in the *Editorial Notes*.

ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

ONE of the most interesting Catalogues to reach me, from a provincial bookseller, for some time past is the twelfth list of Mr. W. H. Robinson, of 4-6, Nelson Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The chief items are very fully described in the Catalogue, and they include many fine printed books and manuscripts. There is, for example, a volume containing two poetical books by Robert Southwell and Joseph Swetnam's *S. Mary Magdalen's Pilgrimage to Paradise*, all printed in St. Omer in 1616 and 1617. This volume is priced £70. Then there is, for £32, a volume containing three hitherto unknown Aberdeen-printed Latin books (two grammatical works and a book on versification) which came from the press of Edward Raban in 1623 and 1624 (the earliest book printed in Aberdeen being dated 1622). There are several of those always interesting manuscript poetical commonplace books of the seventeenth century, one of which (price fifty guineas) contains some verses clearly written by a member of the sect of "Brownists" who emigrated to Amsterdam, and from among whom went forth, in 1620, the Pilgrim Fathers in the *Mayflower*. One stanza of this poem (which is rather of historical, than of literary, interest) runs thus :

In England there is no hope to stayer
When good men are displaced
To Amsterdam is our only waie
And there wee shall be graced ;

which makes the Brownist origin of the verses obvious. Another important book is a fine and perfect copy of the third edition (the first authoritative printed text) of Petrarch, a folio printed at Padua in 1472. This book is extremely rare, and for this copy Mr. Robinson asks £235. There are, it should be added, also many inexpensive books in this catalogue.

FROM Messrs. Maggs Brothers, of 34 and 35, Conduit Street, W., I have received another (Number 460) of their bulky and well-produced Catalogues. The subject of the books described in it is English Literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is also a section of books on sports and pastimes. Altogether nearly three thousand items are described. Among them I notice what is surely a good example of how fashion affects the values of books. A copy of a very rare production of Wordsworth's, the edition of the *Grace Darling* poem privately printed in 1843, is offered for £12 12s. According to Mr. Wise, the bibliographer of Wordsworth (as of so many other great writers) only some half-dozen copies, at most, of this *opusculum* survive. Had the poet been not Wordsworth but—say—Keats or Shelley, the price of a similarly rare pamphlet would be—how much? Certainly ten times as much as the twelve guineas which will purchase *Grace Darling*. Yet is there any critic who will seriously maintain that Wordsworth was a lesser poet than either Keats or Shelley?

IN one of my notes last month I referred to Thomas Fitzgerald (1695?—1752) and quoted from one of his poems. It may therefore possibly interest some one of my readers to learn that there is a copy of the 1781 (Oxford) edition of Fitzgerald's *Poems on Several Occasions* offered (for five shillings) in the fifteenth catalogue of Mr. G. Y. McLeish, of 66, Weltge Road, Hammersmith, W.6. This edition was edited by Thomas Wintour, the grandson of the poet. Fitzgerald, in his own lifetime, issued two editions. So far as I am aware these three editions are the only ones that exist, and none of them is common. Fitzgerald was only a very minor poet, but he had a fresh and graceful touch, and his pieces are well worth the attention of students of eighteenth-century verse. A trifle of his which has always pleased me a good deal is this *On an Over-Vain Poetical Friend* :—

Dear Frank, with fancy, fire and style
Formed a consummate poet,
Burns with impatience all the while
That all the world should know it.

Where'er he goes, with pompous boast
His talent he displays ;
No, not a tittle shall be lost
Of his minutest praise !

Then let's be candid to our friend,
And own his just pretence ;
Nor yet, whilst we his wit commend,
Despise his want of sense.

I really forget whether I have printed this neat little thing before in THE LONDON MERCURY. I don't think so ; but if I have, I make no apology for its repetition. Mr. McLeish's catalogue deserves the attention of collectors of interesting and inexpensive books of all kinds.

TWO catalogues have reached me from Messrs. Davis & Orioli, of 24, Museum Street, W.C.1. Of these Number 23 is devoted chiefly to first editions of modern authors. A special feature is made of some copies of Joseph Conrad's books presented and inscribed by him to the late J. B. Pinker. Of these *Youth*, 1902, is priced £32 10s.;

The Secret Agent, 1907, £20 ; and *Notes on Life and Letters*, privately printed, 1921, £35. Mr. Max Beerbohm is represented by *Caricatures of Twenty-five Gentlemen*, 1896, £8 10s. ; *The Happy Hypocrite*, 1897, £12 12s. ; *The Poet's Corner*, 1904, £3 ; and *Yet Again*, 1909, £8 10s. A presentation copy of Mr. George Moore's *Flowers of Passion*, 1878, is priced £42. There are several W. H. Hudson items, a first edition of his first book, *The Purple Land that England Lost*, 1885, being marked £38, and a presentation copy from Hudson of his and P. L. Sclater's *Argentine Ornithology*, 2 volumes, 1888-1889, £30. Messrs. Davis & Orioli's other list, Number 41, contains older books and manuscripts. There are many incunabula, including a copy of the *Fabulæ* of Bidpai, printed at Strassburg, about 1490, by J. Prüss. This book costs £120. As is usual in this firm's catalogues, there is a section devoted to Italian literature.

MESSRS. ELLIS, of 29, New Bond Street, W.1., have issued a small *Catalogue of Old Song-Books with Tunes*. It contains one hundred and forty books, mostly of the eighteenth century, though there are some seventeenth and some nineteenth century ones also. This is a most attractive list.

I. A. WILLIAMS

BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

TEN YEARS OF FINE PRINTING*

MR. STANLEY MORISON'S *Modern Fine Printing* invites but need not fear comparison with the admirable selection from older works which he gave us last year in his *Four Centuries*. To my mind it even surpasses the earlier book in its interest and practical usefulness. We may liken the *Four Centuries* to a fine collection of labelled specimens in a museum; whereas *Modern Fine Printing* introduces us into the offices of printers now actually at work in their several countries and shows us in wonderful variety the types they are using and—what matters even more in printing—the ways in which they use them.

In size and general arrangement the two books are uniform. In the new volume it is pleasant to note that Mr. Morison's Introduction has been set in double column, which makes a nobler page than do the long lines of *Four Centuries*. The fine Poliphilus type would have looked finer still if the keyboard man had tried to follow Aldus in his much closer spacing and if the lines had not been leaded. Moreover, the contents pages, which state also the types used in the several specimens and the printers and publishers of the books from which they are taken, are spread over forty-four pages of "fat" composition. They would have been far more convenient for reference and far pleasanter to look at if they had been set in a compact eight or nine.

Mr. Morison is at his best when he introduces to us the work of foreign printers, whose books are too little known in this country. He sometimes provokes challenge when he advances theories of his own about the æsthetics of fine printing. He more than any man has reason to be proud of the fine types which on his motion the Lanston Monotype Corporation has put at the service of the printer within the last few years; and he shows also many pages set on the linotype. Yet he is hardly justified in his suggestion that the healthy interest which is now taken in printing springs chiefly from the facilities of mechanical composition. Nor need he sniff at the work done by the private presses, as in the following passage and in others:

The private press enthusiasts of England and Germany were constrained to cut new types for their respective presses. Unfortunately it cannot be claimed that they solved the problem. Whether, as is alleged in some cases, they were designed upon fifteenth century models, or frankly upon the calligraphy of this or that modern scribe, the result has not been agreeable.

It is true that there have been many failures—more even in Germany than in England; yet it is significant that what are perhaps the best of all the types shown in Mr. Morison's selection were cut for private presses. In Holland he seems to have found no specimens which he judged worthy of inclusion except from private presses; and the pages printed by J. F. Van Royen at the Zilverdistel and De Kumera Presses surpass almost anything else in the book both for the beauty of their types and the excellence of their setting and printing. In both it is possible to trace the influence of the Doves Press. I am glad, too, that Mr. Morison has broken his rule of showing

* *Modern Fine Printing*. An Exhibit of Printing issued in England, the United States of America, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia, Holland and Sweden during the Twentieth Century and with few exceptions since the outbreak of the war. By STANLEY MORISON. Folio. Benn. £12 12s.

books printed in roman or italic types only by including two beautiful specimens in the type designed by Mr. Lucien Pissarro for the Zilverdistel Press : it is an adaptation of early Carolingian writing. The Centaur type designed by Mr. Bruce Rogers and used by Mr. H. W. Kent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, also ranks amongst the best which Mr. Morison shows. A collection such as this proves better than any number of isolated examples can ever do how much more important than the mere faces of the types which the printer uses are the ways in which he is able to use them. A good architect will raise fine buildings with whatever material he may have at hand—whether fine marbles, or mere lime-stone from the local quarry, or brick from the local clay, or perhaps even concrete made with the local gravel. So, too, a printer with his types—although the parallel must not be carried too far.

Classifying his specimens according to the several countries, Mr. Morison gives a few notes of helpful criticism on some of the characteristics of the printing done in each. He notes the excellence of the best American printing ; but he considers that the average standard is considerably higher in Germany than in any country in the world. The German specimens number over forty ; and, except that all of them are set in roman type, they illustrate well the high quality attained in modern German book-production. The types and setting owe much to modern calligraphy, dating from the classes instituted by Mr. Edward Johnston at the Central School of Arts and Crafts early in this present century. It is to the shame of English printing that Johnston's work should have borne so much more fruit in an alien country than in his own.

The names of the publishers which accompany the names of the printers of the several specimens, remind us, if we need reminding, how much progress and improvement in book-production depend on the intelligence and good taste of those who commission the printing. This may be seen especially in the French work : the influence and example of the late Edouard Pelletan may still be traced in the books published by his successors as well as in many of those from other firms. Mr. Morison notes that

In France illustration receives more appreciation than typography. Parisian " fine printing " invariably takes the form of an artist's book in which typography is completely subordinated to the illustration.

Many of the pages are illustrated by wood-engravings of the kind which forms such a notable and pleasant feature of modern French publishing.

The Italian specimens are disappointing. Only three books are shown, all of them from the press of Bertieri and Vanzetti, of Milan, whose Inkunabula type, a very corrupt following of Ratdolt's, is used with no evident appreciation of Ratdolt's own printing. The Swiss specimens are all imitations of Bodoni, carried out at the Officina Bodoni at Montagnola, and printed on a hand-press from types cast from Bodoni's original matrices, which are now owned by the Italian Government. The examples from Czecho-Slovakia and Sweden are interesting for their achievement but even more for their promise.

The ingenious border which Mr. Morison uses on his title-page deserves a note to itself. It is made up of *g*'s from Blado's italic, adopted by Mr. Morison for use with the Poliphilus type, every alternate stamp being turned *arsey-varsey* (so Smollett might have called it), thus :



Only Mr. Morison—and perhaps Mr. Bruce Rogers—could play such a prank !

B. H. NEWDIGATE

CHRONICLES

THE DRAMA

THE ORPHAN. By THOMAS OTWAY. Phoenix Society. The Aldwych Theatre.

THE *Orphan*—or *The Unhappy Marriage*. An understatement with a vengeance. Monimia, the orphan, was left under the guardianship of Old Acasto, a nobleman retired from the Court. His sons Castalio and Polydore were both “in love” with her, one honourably, one dishonourably. Castalio secretly married her, without telling Polydore. Polydore, knowing that his brother was to spend the night with her and thinking it merely a wanton excursion, tricked him out of it and spent the night with her himself, she remaining under the delusion that she was with her husband. It all came out. The horrified Monimia took poison; the horrified Polydore forced Castalio to kill him; the horrified Castalio killed himself. The subplot, with the happy union of Chamount and Serma, was poor compensation. An unhappy marriage indeed!

There is one thing and one thing only to be said in favour of Otway’s play. The author of *Venice Preserved*, who wrote a few good poems and a few good patches of poetry, had a natural gift for verse. Whether arguing or expressing passion he could write verse smoothly, colloquially, musically. Some of the passages in *The Orphan* which were, dramatically, quite unconvincing, were pleasant to hear because of the easy liquid way in which they flowed from the lips of the characters. But Golly, what a play!

Dryden’s *Assignation* was bad enough; but that at least was inferior work by a great man. *The Orphan* is heartless hack-work by a second-rate man. The plot, to start with, is hopelessly unconvincing. It might have just done (barring, of course, the end) for the plot of a farce; but in the plot of a tragedy you have, more or less, to believe. From the very start Otway makes his characters behave in a way which one cannot credit, a way in which even his preposterous puppets could not have behaved. To begin with, the whole structure of intrigue and slaughter is built up on the presumption that Castalio could not divulge the fact that he was married. Why? We cannot believe that his brother would have killed him for it; or that, if he would so have done, delay could improve matters. And we certainly cannot believe that the mild old Acasto would have cut his son off with a shilling for it. There was no objection to the ward as a bride: a girl of good family and admired by everybody; an excellent match. In so far as we might be able to accept the situation our sympathy with the feeble Castalio would necessarily diminish; but it could not be accepted, feeble though, in any event, he was. Otway, when keeping the husband out of his wife’s room by means of a very conversational and cynical little page, again failed to convince. A deplorable lack of invention, of trouble to invent even, was shown: such a page never would have kept eager husband from loving wife; Castalio would have beaten the brat off the stage. Then again, after the repulsive deception, the disclosure was postponed with all too transparent artifice, or with all too arbitrary lack of artifice. All that long scene in which Castalio (thinking he has been capriciously shut out all night) behaves brutally to Monimia, can take place only if Monimia does not give the show away, if neither of them attempts a clearing up of facts. It was impossible to approach illusion here: it wasn’t a question of “what is going to happen

to them next ? ” but of “ what nonsense is Otway going to make them say next ? ” There was a touch of ingenuity and dramatic suspense about the scene in which Polydore deliberately goads his brother into slaying him. There was a touch of pathos about the death of Monimia, as there must always be about the spectacle of an agonised girl dying in her repentant lover’s arms : no man but must weep when Little Willie expires in *East Lynne*, fatuous though the precedent situations have been. But the whole plot was incredible ; not one of the characters had a chance of approaching reality ; and the manœuvring of the plot, such as it was, was extremely amateurish. Otway cared not at all whether or not he produced his most vital explanations in soliloquies. He was making a cheap play in the tragic mode ; and he hoped it would pay. Mrs. Barry, they told us on the programme, when she acted the part of Monimia, “ forc’d Tears from the Eyes of her Auditory, especially those who have any sense of Pity for the Distress’d.” She certainly might ; but only because of the natural proclivities of men, who cannot help being “ Distress’d ” if they see a woman tortured. Little credit was due to the dramatist for it.

The play, being one of the worst ever written, naturally did not inspire the actors. It would be unfair to specify those of them who did badly (one or two made the most of their melodramatic material) because nobody could be blamed for acting unconvincingly in such rubbish ; but certainly we have never seen a Phoenix play so badly acted. Let us at least praise Mr. Norman Wilkinson’s setting.

For the June production Southerne’s *The Fatal Marriage* was announced. Buckingham’s *The Rehearsal* has now been substituted for this. It is a pity. Not that *The Rehearsal* is not amusing, but that the Phoenix has now exhausted the best and most typical of the generally-unacted Elizabethan and Restoration plays, and that one had hoped that they would move onwards a bit. They are not afraid of bad plays : let them attempt Southerne and Mrs. Pix. Let them, if they can screw their courage up, try Addison’s *Cato*, very famous in its day. Let them attempt a play or two by Nat Lee, who could at least better *The Orphan*. Let them do Susanna Centlivre’s *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, a very amusing comedy which has given us the proverbial character, or at least name, of Simon Pure. Let them move on still farther and produce some of the eighteenth century tragedies ; and some of the plays of Foote, Cumberland, and Colman. Let them, if they can raise a small orchestra, revive a few of the scores of Ballad-Operas, the music at least of which was delightful. There is no absolute rule whereunder any play dated 1600 odd must be considered better than any play dated 1700 odd ; and a mixture drawn from a wider area should certainly please the Phoenix audiences, and would assist those whose interest in these performances is mainly historical.

PUBLICATIONS

THEATRICAL IMPRESSIONS. By JULES LEMAITRE. Selected and Translated by Frederic Whyte. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

THE CONTEMPORARY THEATRE, 1924. By JAMES AGATE. Chapman and Hall. 7s. 6d.

CONVERSATIONS ON CONTEMPORARY DRAMA. By CLAYTON HAMILTON. Macmillan.

WHEN Mr. Whyte first conceived the idea of making a selection from Jules Lemaître’s *Impressions de Théâtre*—a book too long neglected by English readers—a friend told him that he could “ pick anywhere in Lemaître.” He found

when he came to the work that this idea was a mistaken one, and in his preface he tells us something of his difficulties ; but it seems to us that he has overcome them all. This is a wise, just and representative selection, ranging from articles on *Le Demi-Monde* of Alexandre Dumas *fils* (revived at the Comédie-Française in the spring of 1890) and Rostand's *Cyrano* to criticisms of the *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet* and *Ghosts*. It is interesting to observe how Ibsen's drama affected Lemaître :

Ghosts is an energetic, almost ferocious, defence of the *joie de vivre* as against religious gloom, of nature as against law, of individualism as against the oppression exercised by social prejudices. . . . A soul's revolution, one of most intense and most universal interest, is set forth in it with power and audacity, and with a sort of wild *élan*. . . . The work is outwardly peaceful, slow in movement, and as though wrapped in snow. . . . The scenes follow each other in a drab atmosphere, the interminable dialogues reminding one of the rain which beats unceasingly against the window-pane. In this setting we have one of the most violent dramas a man can conceive—a drama of the mind, of the conscience, in its silent way appalling, with some sudden outbursts.

And this is his view of *Hamlet* :

. . . . The importance of will and the restlessness of thought of which the Prince of Denmark is the still ingenuous prey, are just the two diseases which have accentuated themselves and become most widely spread during this century of ours among civilised peoples. So that even though *Hamlet* is a child and utters many absurdities, though his pessimism and his misanthropy are puerile and superficial, we recognise in him the germ of our own woes, we read our own malady into his, and, without noticing it, introduce into his mind the minds of all the dreamers, of all the men and women who have grieved and languished and known despair ever since his time, and that is why *Hamlet* is tremendous.

Lemaître recognises with Hazlitt and Victor Hugo that " it is *we* who are *Hamlet*," yet he finds the last two acts " tedious," and the gravediggers' scene a " grotesque kind of drollery, which has come to seem terribly banal."

Mr. Agate reprints in *The Contemporary Theatre* another batch of his always interesting dramatic criticisms. This volume covers the principal productions of last year, and includes sections entitled " Entertainments " and " Films," as well as the more legitimate drama. He has a short but adequate essay on Eleonora Duse and a discriminating appreciation of the late William Archer.

Conversations on Contemporary Drama is what the author (who is a lecturer at Columbia University) calls an " experiment in the broadcasting of unpremeditated speech from the lecture-platform to a distant audience." He deals briefly in his first lecture with general contemporary drama, then proceeds to a more detailed examination of the work of various European dramatists including Mr. Shaw, Mr. Galsworthy, Sir J. M. Barrie and Rostand, and concludes with a survey of American drama at the present time, and some observations on the plays of Mr. Eugene O'Neill. The unpremeditation of Mr. Hamilton's lectures is apparent from his style, but there is a freshness and naïveté about his dramatic criticism which makes it fairly certain that his audience enjoyed it and that a larger public will be interested in it.

J. C. SQUIRE

THE FINE ARTS

THE NEW ENGLISH ART CLUB. Spring Gardens

THE ROYAL ACADEMY. Burlington House

THE PALACE OF ARTS. Wembley

THE new quarters of the New English Art Club at Spring Gardens, in the spacious circular room and its vestibules, are a great improvement upon the single room in Pall Mall where the Society always seemed cramped and confined. Following its somewhat hurried, although extremely interesting, retrospective exhibition at the beginning of the year, the Society has held the first of a series of annual exhibitions. While, apart from the Sargents, there were no very noteworthy pictures, it was an exhibition showing a good deal of promise and variety. The three portraits by the late J. S. Sargent, "the Countess of Rocksavage," "Lady Sassoon," and "Mrs. Charles Hunter" were the centre of interest, not merely because of the occasion, but also because of their intrinsic merit. Their style and sentiment belongs to the nineteenth century and in that sense they are old-fashioned and, to use an unpleasant phrase, they "date." But that is not the whole of what is meant by this phrase, which implies that the glamour has gone out of the work and that it is no longer possible to see what people formerly did see in it. The glamour is still in these Sargents and there seems to me to be more definite beauty in them than in the National Gallery portraits. They have less of the slick, glossy brushwork of the Sargent who had become too skilled a portrait painter, and more of the crisp brilliance and compact elegance of the eighteenth century, of Lely and Kneller at their best.

The early portraits by Mr. William Rothenstein appeared, in comparison, ineffective, but Mr. Rothenstein's mountain landscape, though a trifle laboured, is a fine description of green, sunlit slopes and tranquil mountain spaces. Similarly Professor Tonks's beach painting is a good study in the impressionist manner in spite of the formal grouping of the figures in the foreground. Professor Tonks enjoyed the brilliant lighting of the crowded beach as an artist and then thought about the arrangement as a theorist. The *raison d'être* of the three large decorative compositions by Messrs. Walker, West and Burn was obscure. There was more substance in some of the small oil paintings by Messrs. Gwynne-Jones, Innes, Ginner, Rowles, C. Cundall and Newton. Miss Rowles, whose small seascapes, reminiscent of Bonington, have a distinct charm, is too easily satisfied with superficially effective ways of rounding off her work. Mr. Algernon Newton has reserved his most ambitious paintings for the Academy, where one of them has been skied. It is, I suspect, one of the most notable pictures in the Academy and this is not said in derogation of that exhibition. Mr. Newton bids fair to become a modern Canaletto. He has hitherto based himself rather too closely on the static style of the Venetian master and also of eighteenth century English prints, and he has scarcely got beyond a poster-like impression of neat blocks of houses, spacious streets cut by sharp shadows and serene, but lifeless, skies. He has created a toy London, quaint, but of cardboard. In this picture of Waterloo Bridge his London is alive and is invested at the same time with greater depth and solidity and atmosphere.

The somewhat truculent and reactionary utterances of the new President of the Academy made one apprehensive lest the improvements effected of recent years would be set aside and the exhibitions would return completely to the photographic portrait and sentimentalist subject picture. The President may be quite right when he declares that the violent futurist spirit is moribund and that artists are returning to soberer ways: but one at any rate of the reasons for this more constructive temper is that the principal irritant is also disappearing. That horribly uneducated academicism of the last century, ignorant of real art, yet in its ignorance claiming that its photographic and sentimentalist productions were in the classical tradition, is dying out. In spite of the reactionaries the improvement is just maintained at the Academy. It is true that there is a very large amount of wretched photographic stuff and that the better paintings are sandwiched in between these vulgarities (which are nearly always of big proportions) in very much the same way as the good items in a music hall programme. But one accepts that as almost inevitable. The important thing is that there should be these good items and that their number should increase.

It gave a shock to see from the early notices and photographs of the exhibition that an artist of the standing of Mr. Glyn Philpot had gone in for a "subject picture," and such a subject! And the photographs suggested one of those enormous canvases with the figures worked out in hard detail. Reason might whisper that there was no solid *a priori* objection to any subject being dealt with; that it all depended on the outlook and handling: but reason was quickly overcome by a feeling of horror at the idea of a picture of a "street accident." The actual picture, however, is small and inoffensive and scarcely at all melodramatic. Quiet, painted almost in monochrome, classical in grouping and showing taste and refinement in its general conception and handling, it is only open to criticism for its lack of imaginative purpose. Mr. Philpot has in fact attempted a subject which only a Rembrandt or possibly a Forain could cope with adequately, unless the subject were side-tracked completely and wrapt up in some contrast of light and shade or tangle of lines and forms. Still, if only all "subject pictures" had been as sober and restrained as this one there would never have grown up the prevailing prejudice against them. And after all what is that painting of "Victor Lecour" by that veteran impressionist and idol of the London Group, Mr. Walter Sickert, but a subject picture and a fine one too? Mr. Sickert has employed all the resources of his impressionist technique to describe this portly Frenchman who is planted discursively in his sunlit room with the view of the sea front and the blue sea. It is an excellent piece of story-telling without words. Mr. Sickert may appear a little out of his element amid the gloss and glitter of fashionable Academy pictures: but there is really no very serious difference between Mr. Sickert's landscape painting and that of Mr. Clausen, and Mr. Clausen, formerly a member of the New English Art Club, stands for nearly all that is best in the modern academy group. Both artists have come strongly under the influence of the French impressionists, that is to say of the school which was chiefly concerned with the problem of sunlight and atmosphere. Their personalities as expressed in their art necessarily differ and different valuations will necessarily be placed on their work: but the divergencies will not be found so great as they are between Mr. Clausen and some of his other colleagues of the more academic kind. Mr. Clausen shows several good examples of his recent work, especially No. 80, "Sunset on Duton Hill." Like Professor Tonks, Mr. Clausen thinks about the structure of his pictures too professionally and arranges them too much according to a general scheme. Within this stereotyped structure there glows a delicate sensibility which gives a subtle and gentle charm to his pastoral scenes. Mr. McEvoy, another member of the New English Art Club, who is

establishing himself at the Academy, is well represented by one of the three portraits which he exhibits, that of Miss M. Guinness. He presents an aristocratically pretty type, not merely in general terms, but expressing something of its freshness and fragrance, isolating just those qualities in a manner which is effective and yet leaves a background of vagueness and emptiness. Mr. Walter Russell, still another emigrant from the New English Art Club, will probably add to his already considerable reputation by his portraits shown this year. Possibly what seems to me his great shortcoming only enhances in the eyes of his admirers the fascination of his work : this is his softened, almost soapy texture. In itself, of course, a soft texture is neither worse nor better than any other kind : but the particular softness here is an exaggeration of sensitiveness and subtlety and therefore an unreal and artificial subtlety. In apparent contrast with this is Sir William Orpen's masculine firmness in portraiture. It is equally illusory. The forcible realisation has in fact no depth, and when the modern glamour has worn off it will assume a lifeless harshness. Sir William Orpen's satire relies too much on the general fact that the audience at some performance looked more like beasts than the real animals on the stage. The satire is not quite individualised : nevertheless in his satirical painting Sir William shows more artistry than in his portraits. Similarly Sir John Lavery and Mr. Charles Sims are landscape painters rather than portrait painters. Mr. Shannon on the other hand is pre-eminently a portrait painter. Simply because Mrs. Dodd Procter obtains a forcible third dimensional effect by a modification of the technique of Cézanne there is no reason to hail her work as either peculiarly modern or peculiarly interesting. Her picture is simple and dignified, but there is more real significance in Mr. Algernon Newton's painting of Paddington Basin in the neighbouring room, which, to all appearance, has nothing whatsoever to do with Cézanne.

The drawing and water-colour section in the Academy is always disappointing. Like our Royal Water-colour Societies, the Academy is contented with anæmic imitations of the works of the early English water-colourists. The result is that this great and peculiarly English tradition is here in a state of decadence. It is more alive in the small annual exhibitions of the Modern English Water Colour Society which are held at the St. George's Gallery and also in the water-colour section of the New English Art Club's Exhibitions.

The council responsible for the Palace of Arts at Wembley have arranged a fresh exhibition this year on the lines of the last one, and they have again done their work very well. I cannot pretend to review the exhibition here : I can only say that it is well worth a visit. All the schools of painting are represented, and there is something to interest and annoy everyone. Last year's miscellaneous collection of old English masters is replaced by a series of paintings illustrating "English life." It includes some gems such as Richard Wilson's "de Tabley House" and much to entertain and amuse. A foreigner or even many English visitors passing through the gallery might think that the collection, being of old pictures, was intended to represent English classical painting, and the real purpose should therefore be made clear in writing in the Gallery as well as in a small headline in the catalogue. The Adams room (complete with waxwork figures of Dr. Johnson and his friends) was not open at the early date of my visit : it should prove almost as great a draw as the Queen's Dolls' House last year.

HOWARD HANNAY

POETRY

THE TORCH-BEARERS. II. The Book of Earth. By ALFRED NOYES. Blackwood. 7s. 6d.

THE SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS. By LORD GORELL. Fisher Unwin. 7s. 6d.

MR. NOYES and Lord Gorell have one great quality in common. In an age when most genuine poets, lacking a philosophy and a general hope, have concentrated upon getting the essence of a mood or a moment into a brief lyric, they both attempt to see life as a whole, to maintain the relation between the temporal and the eternal, and to expound what they think and feel on a major scale.

Mr. Noyes's volume is the second in a series which may go on indefinitely. *The Torch-Bearers* is a rather commonplace title, embalming a commonplace metaphor. Mr. Noyes's ambition is to exhibit the enlargement of human knowledge from the earliest ages, by means of a series of sketches of the lives and characters and vital moments of pioneers ; and he relates all of them to an eternal process concerned in the word of God. His first volume was devoted to astronomers, and there were some very fine passages in it. The doctors and geographical explorers are presumably to come : this volume is concerned with the geologists and those who have gradually built up the evolution theory.

Mr. Noyes begins with a vision, grandiose and ornate, but containing some fine lines, of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, that giant cleft which must make any spectator think of the Earth's history. He then proceeds to a pretty sketch of the sodality of Pythagoras and his death ; then to an account of Aristotle, more concrete because more is known of him. The interest grows as we approach modern times. Leonardo is very well done ; the French eighteenth century scientists and Linnæus are done still better ; and the poem reaches its climax with a full poetical version of the famous debate at Oxford between Huxley, Bishop Wilberforce and Owen on the subject of Darwin's theories. A writer whose object was purely informative on these subjects might have been very dull. But Mr. Noyes is buoyed up by two things : the first, a passionate conviction in the existence and purpose of God, and the second (the two are not always united), a passionate care and reverence for the truth, coupled with a willingness to accept any truth that may spring to light. To him Darwin's opponents, though Darwin may have been in some regards wrong, are simply cowards ; and the result is that his account, quite fair, of the debate, thrills with excitement. The battle becomes a battle of good and evil giants ; what was a mere newspaper report yesterday becomes dramatic poetry, with even the audience important and amusing.

The lean tall figure of Huxley quietly rose.
He looked, for a moment, thoughtfully at the crowd ;
Saw rows of hostile faces ; caught the grin
Of ignorant curiosity ; here and there,
A hopeful gleam of friendship ; and, far, back,
The young, swift-footed, waiting for the fire.
He fixed his eyes on these—then, in low tones,
Clear, cool, incisive, " I have come here," he said,
" In the cause of Science only."

That is how he does his linking-up passages ; and even in such lines his excitement can be felt. There are five thousand lines of it ; and, except for certain pages at the

beginning, it is all easily readable and often more. Mr. Noyes may be congratulated on his energy and faith ; the fastidious and the cynical who underrate him would be the better for a little of it. In long poems such as this he is at his best ; for lyrics he lacks the last refinement of ear and the last accuracy of language ; few poets write these with a general pre-possession.

Lord Gorell's volume, in spite of its rather commonplace title, is very interesting. He takes his hero, Deucalion, through all the main experiences of life : childish sports, a love of nature, manly sports, the love of woman ; until in the end he finds salvation in dedication to a life of science. The allegory is always quite clear : there is even some obvious cricket in the poem. But I cannot help thinking that Lord Gorell handicapped himself by his classical framework. He deliberately announces at the beginning that the repudiation of the present is not for him, nor a romantic refuge among old works of art and ways of life. But in describing what are essentially the experiences and struggles of a man of our own time, he employs a classical terminology and scenery which put him in difficulties. It might have been harder to have described everything in modern terms, but the reward would have been worth it ; the translation into Greek terms inevitably dims detail of every kind ; one has the feeling that Lord Gorell, for the sake of reticence, is turning a Londoner into a Greek philosopher, a bat into a javelin, and an English lady into a nymph. Nevertheless his poem remains interesting : it is sincere and thoughtful and it is written in excellent smooth blank verse. The classical milieu tempts the poet to rather traditional tricks ; orthodox similes in the usual places, and so on. But he does not pad, he has a good ear, and he has the gift (rare to-day) of writing blank verse parodies as well as lines. And his spirit is very exhilarating ; we do feel, at the end, that we have gone with his hero through all his experiences, and we do accept and rejoice in his conclusion that :

Here in this cloth of many woven strands,
This living garment wrought of joy and pain,
Labour, hope, sorrow, fellowship, resolve,
All ailments and all ease of mortal minds,
Shot through with thy love's flaming, I abide.
Herein, much toiling, known of men, besought,
With many a gladness, many a burden shared,
Earth's accents and Life's purpose, breaking waves,
Have fallen upon me to a nobler sound.
Herein I serve : herein have I been given
The spirit of my search. A hundred paths
Blossom before me. All my length of days
Can never drain the marsh of human needs,
Yet may a man a little of the love,
On him outpoured, to others yield again,
And in the yielding find his soul's content.
All happiness is service ; that alone,
Established changeless in the changing heart,
Is journey's end, Life's single shrine of Peace.

I think that Lord Gorell might as well discard the Greek trappings and come closer to modernity. "Now when grey-eyed Aurora, saffron-robed," well as he does it, is better in a translation from Homer or a reprint from Keats than in a poem like his, directly addressed to the problems of modern life. But there is no bad verse in his book ; there are many admirable things, especially the Ode to Aphrodite and the Address to Poetry ; his general narrative is convincing and his general drift acceptable.

J. C. S.

FICTION

THE PAINTED VEIL. By SOMERSET MAUGHAM. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

ST. MAWR. By D. H. LAWRENCE. Secker. 7s. 6d.

DORIS. By DOROTHY JOHNSON. Jarrolds. 7s. 6d.

THE Age of Gold and the Age of Silver in literature have passed and have been properly labelled. One frequently wonders whether this our era will hereafter be known as the Age of Petticoats, since our fiction, drama and even, to some extent, poetry, have so largely retrieved these articles but recently discarded by Fashion. How important women's nerves have become ! Around these jaded fibres the themes of fiction arrange themselves, to present, to explain, to condone. Heroism, duty, sacrifice, are worn thin ; the comedy of human existence evokes no laughter and its pathos no tears. Man is born, not to work, think and die, but to minister to the neurasthenic sensations of one or more women. The law and the gospels of Sinai and Galilee have been repealed in favour of the new revelation from Vienna.

This shifting of the accent from masculine to feminine has resulted in a great change in the connotations of fiction. No one will dispute, I suppose, that most women's judgment of conduct differs radically from most men's—certainly the greatest of our women novelists will not dispute it. Man at his best attempts to judge according to broad and universal rules of honour and right, and to stand sturdily by the result—the earlier Brutus is an example. Woman, in fiction and in life, is usually at her best when in passionate enmity against these rules on behalf of a favoured offender—no one expects Cleopatra to attempt to save Antony from an incomprehensible concept of honour. This difference in outlook is older than the art of writing, but it is quite recently that the special judgment has superseded the universal as a means of classifying human acts. And since the situations in which these special judgments can find expression are much too simple to satisfy for long even the unsophisticated, novelists tend to specialise in the most piquant one, adultery, and complicate it with all the motives a practising psycho-analyst could possibly think of. Unfortunately, the more it is explained the less piquant it becomes to everyone concerned.

I have tried to make my blanket as broad as possible, in order to cover both Mr. Maugham and Mr. Lawrence, but each sticks out a bit at the sides. The former certainly has an exaggerated idea of our interest in Kitty Lane's infidelity, since she herself thought it no great matter and went and did it again, but he does not attempt a whitewashing. The latter, after preparing us to understand sadly his heroine's impending affair with a half-breed stable groom, does not allow her to proceed in this direction, but makes her realise that sex is not for her. In one case she does and it doesn't matter, in the other she doesn't and it does. On the whole these two do not strike me, after all, as good bed-fellows, Mr. Maugham being almost impudently detached, Mr. Lawrence quite morbidly engrossed, so for the moment I separate them.

The Painted Veil begins with a scene of extraordinary dramatic power. The heroine, wife of a government bacteriologist in China, is receiving her lover, a high official of the colony, during a quiet hour of the day. They suddenly suspect that they are being spied upon and rapidly pass through the emotions of fright, uncertainty, reassurance and, at last, a pretended humorous indifference. In these six pages the characters of both are bitten into the paper with acid—little that we learn later

amplifies either very much. We know that Kitty's love for the handsome Charlie is the consequence of boredom in a vain, frivolous woman, that his for her is the indulgence of a pampered man. We know with absolute certainty that he will let her down when the moment comes for him to make good his promises to her. The amount of action and character packed into so small a compass is incredible—it is like a crash of great opening chords which arrest the attention while stating the theme. The rest of the book never attains this level—the character of Walter Lane is well developed within narrow limits, and there is some beautiful writing—a paragraph on a sunrise over a river in the interior of China is memorable as a description of a natural phenomenon. But on the whole the story runs down.

Walter, the husband, discovers the truth, and emerges as a personality. Hitherto, both to Kitty and the reader, he has been a shadowy young man who had helped her out of an unpleasant home, and given her a love he knew to be unrequited. He gives her now the choice of defending a divorce-suit which can have only one issue or accompanying him to a plague-stricken region up-country. She frantically seeks an alternative—she points out to him that as a gentleman he is bound to give her a divorce, to which by no means original proposition he accedes on the condition that the other man marry her. She is finally forced to accompany him to the plague-ridden province, where under the influence of some nuns and in the constant shadow of death she is supposed to find a new meaning in life. Since her metamorphosis leads her to the belief that cheating a trusting husband was of small importance and causes her to repeat her offence after his death with the man she now thoroughly despises, one cannot take it too seriously.

Mr. Maugham is undoubtedly one of the most tantalizing figures now writing. His talents are obviously of the first order in many respects ; they are perhaps more those of the dramatist than of the novelist, but no one can seriously question the standing of the author of *Of Human Bondage* in the latter category. He has a genius for intrigue and knows people, principally the wrong sort of people. His pose of detachment, less evident in this work than in others, is responsible, I think, for his gravest error. Detachment is a valuable frame of mind, but there are certain matters upon which no great writer can be, or ever has been, detached. Sin is sin, and in the last analysis cannot be explained or laughed off, in this world at least. The special circumstances may be acceptable to the Home Office, but the greatest art does not recognise them. We may have every sympathy for a murderer, his wrong may have served a great right, but he must stand the consequences. Orestes did not whine his excuses, Hamlet left Horatio to tell his story in simple dignity. Neither expected to be let off ; both realised their crime as a personal sacrifice to duty. The laws of the world could not be changed because they had a private vengeance to exact. The opposite spectacle, such an one as was presented in a play last year, wherein the hero kills a dope-fiend who is mistreating his young wife, in the smug consciousness of a perfect defence, is simply nauseating. I am far from making a plea for the book with a moral ; on the contrary, the sort of thing I last referred to is silly because it always implies a moral, such as circumstances alter cases, or that there is no sin, merely mistakes or neuroses. Mr. Maugham is too intelligent to be guilty of any such nonsense, but his non-committal attitude is almost as serious a defect in his case. He must know that his sordid thrusters and joyless debauchees are not as representative of humanity as his bright aloofness would lead one to expect. He is wasting his talents on them as completely as Michael Angelo would have, had he spent his life under the delusion that a figure in marble and one in manure come to the same thing in the end. Even detachment requires a point of view, roots, convictions ; until he

has these, Mr. Maugham, who might succeed Congreve, is in the position of writing comedies of manners about people who have no manners.

Mr. Lawrence's crime is not that of detachment. He forlornly sees the world engulfed by evil which

had swept mankind away without mankind's knowing. It had caught up the nations as the rising ocean might lift the fishes, and was sweeping them on in a great tide of evil. They did not know. The people did not know. They did not even wish it. They wanted to be good and to have everything joyful and enjoyable. Everything joyful and enjoyable: for everybody. This was what they wanted, if you ask them.

It may be as bad as our author says, but I feel more cheerful after reading him. I am not sure that he has full information, because all of his people run round thinking in terms of phallic symbolism, and I am quite sure that very few of the people I know do that. They may be less intelligent, but they are hastening the flood of evil with less urgency.

Before going off on his familiar tack, Mr. Lawrence writes an excellent story about a horse, St. Mawr, a beautiful, untamed creature, which nearly kills several people, including his owner's husband—he is thus directly the means of separating the couple. The most interesting person is old Mrs. Wilt, the caustic mother of the heroine. Between her, her daughter, her son-in-law and two stable grooms, four of these quite original types, the story moves on in excellent style, until the expected happens—the old lady proposes marriage to one groom, who refuses her, the daughter speculates on the peculiar maleness of St. Mawr, a quality none of her men friends possesses, until for some altogether inexplicable reason she transfers her interest to the other groom—and the novel was finished with difficulty. Included in the same volume is a short story, *The Princess*, which repeats once more its author's conception of life as a conquest of wills for sexual possession. The woman is English, the man Mexican; the setting is New Mexico. I took a dislike to the heroine at once, since her father and others called her "the Princess," although she wasn't of the Blood Royal at all.

Doris is Miss Dorothy Johnson's first novel. It is the story of a handsome school-girl dominated by her equally handsome and far cleverer mother. The shy affection on the one side and the selfish resentment, covered by a mask of good fellowship, on the other, are ably and subtly done. The pathos of the situation is never strained, although the difficult problem of working the girl up to suicide and then preventing her at the last moment from going through with it results in a sort of anti-climax; nevertheless the crisis becomes quite poignant. Miss Johnson writes with the maturity of wide experience; she has a singular capacity for indicating the emotions of solitary people, like Doris, Doris's father, and Miss Ellwin; all these arouse the reader's discriminating pity by means of the author's own subtle and sympathetic touches. The last-named is an arresting character, and could Miss Johnson but transfer her to the post of heroine in a subsequent novel and fill in the outlines of the present conception, she might well add a memorable portrait to the gallery of modern English female characters.

MILTON WALDMAN

BELLES-LETTRES—I

THE PEAL OF BELLS. By ROBERT LYND ("Y.Y."). Methuen. 6s.

MANY FURROWS. By ALPHA OF THE PLOUGH. Dent. 5s.

FANCY NOW. By "EVOE" (E. V. KNOX). Methuen. 6s.

WHITE HORSE AND RED LION. By JAMES AGATE. Collins. 7s. 6d.

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS. Third and Final Series. By HAVELOCK ELLIS. Constable. 12s. 6d.

A BLESSED unendingness is Mr. Robert Lynd's most striking and immediate quality, and *The Peal of Bells* is a perfect example of it. True that the new collection of his essays hardly exceeds two hundred pages, and that his twenty-seven subjects look for the most part commonplace and almost sterile ; yet with an invincible ease and brightness he touches these dessicated themes as if they had never been touched before—Solitude, Farewell to Tobacco, School, Heat and the rest—and seems to find them inexhaustible. He does not finish : he leaves off. He breaks through the tediousness of the mind and its ways like the sun dispelling fog, and he goes on shining long after the fog has gone. Blessed unendingness !—A penurious chronicler whose meagre pen limps weakly word to word, moving to a ghostly, dry skeleton tune ; a chronicler who never knows, as he stumbles to the end of one sentence, where the next is coming from, must needs be envious and astonished at Mr. Lynd's profusion ; until at last envy gives place to pleasure and he is content to limp so long as he can watch that other nimble in the air above him. To find unendingness in conversation is, alas, not rare ; to find it in the essay and not be bored is something to thank the stars for. Even Mr. Lynd's reminders of other essayists contribute to our pleasure.

You feel a kindness to Mr. Lynd as you turn back to *Winterslow* ; as you do when, after reading the following, your hand strays to the bedside shelves and fumbles for Montaigne :

It is said that in the end men grow tired of the body, and are glad enough to leave it. Those who do, I fancy, are bolder spirits than I. I am naturally a stay-at-home, and the only home in which I have lived all my life is my body. Born under Saturn, I have nevertheless been happy enough never to wish to change it for a better. If I have wished to be a better man, I have still wished for the new spirit to inhabit the same body, for, though it is a body that no man could be proud of, not being built in any of the noble styles of architecture, I am used to it and am bound to it by all manner of sympathies. Not that I have looked after it as well as I might have done. I have allowed it to sink into dilapidation and disrepair, so that it already resembles more than it should a piece of antiquity. But even the crooked man with the crooked cat probably lived happily enough in his crooked little house, and would not have left it without compulsion.

This passage—and almost any other—will show how naturally one thought bubbles out of another, like those airy iris'd nothings blown by children from a white clay pipe, one succeeding another shimmeringly, one enlarging upon another—until that two-handed engine at the door smites, the greedy editor snatches, and the bubbles are gone. There is, perhaps, no thought that is above us, nothing we couldn't have thought for ourselves if we'd had the mind, nothing in fact strictly original and innovating (any more than in Shakespeare, Hazlitt, Lamb or any other that we conventionally admire), yet every page has a morning freshness and makes the reader feel the livelier for reading it. Not always do we agree with Mr. Lynd and hence,

it may be, comes a part of our stimulation ; as when he says that the cinema is all very well as a record of other people's experiences, but that we are ultimately dissatisfied with other people's and want our own. Is this indeed our ageing experience ? Don't we rather slip into contentment and sip our adventures—like our loves—vicariously, pleading that after all the real adventures are in the mind, the mind ? Poor evasion, no doubt. Mr. Lynd has a way with him whether we agree with him or violently demur : it is his *alert* that awakes us and keeps us acute while he talks. And best of all when the essayist turns reporter and relates a conversation between book-makers, beginning, " Did you ever know a good man to last ? Everybody gets knocked sometimes, everybody as was ever born. . . . Tom Rooney's dead, and Barney Rudge, and Jack the Scotsman who came from Belfast. And I could name dozens more. All good fellows. And all dead."

Alpha of the Plough has not Mr. Lynd's quality of effortless unendingness. I do not mean merely that his essays are shorter, but that they are short-breathed, separate, unassociated. He captures more successfully, because more naturally, the note of the common man, though it would be stupid to forget that the common man does not write essays at all. The common man whose cloak Alpha assumes is as far from essay writing as suburbia from the South Pole. But Alpha's subjects are those that the common man delights in—the common man of five-and-forty : suburban subjects set in a suburban world, bounded on the east by tram lines, on the west by 'bus routes, on the north by a sewage farm, and on the south by the playing fields of an orphan asylum. Men stay at home there, and vote even at municipal elections, and dream of journeys afar, pay homage to the Unknown Warrior, play golf between whiskies, eat, sip, mumble, bore and are bored. Alpha hovers lightly above them as above a green-patched pool, pauses, plunges in, and is off again with a lazy whirr of wings. He is almost as nimble as Mr. Lynd but less luminous ; his light is that of common day and smoking sky.

Mr. E. V. Knox's *Fancy Now* is a more flattering heap of trifles, offering something which it pleases one's judgment to detect while thinking that probably no one else has noticed the secret quality of the trifles. To me the true surprise is that many of his little essays are so much better than they pretend to be. Pretend ? they pretend to be nothing but the jokes of the kindest and most unassuming soul in the world. But so often they are much more. The very first trifle, " Londoners," hints at something far from trivial—that the simple woman or plain man leads a hunted life, since each must be labelled and the anonymous is abhorred.

People talk disrespectfully sometimes about lion-hunters, but the true vice of Londoners is beetle-catching. It does not matter what kind of beetle it is so long as it has a name. *To be lost in London ! What a delicious dream !* Every moment one is threatened by a collector with a label and a pin.

It cannot, I misdoubt, be helped ; each is for a party. As in a small quiet town everybody must belong to some devout sect, though elsewhere we say that sectarianism is dead, so in London we are all ist's and an's, and few reach the eminence of Mr. Knox's plain man who is nothing but himself. Another instance of Mr. Knox flattering his reader's intelligence by making that reader laugh at another is " A Great Political Letter." It is a cruel, acute thrust at spinsters whose brains were forgotten when they were born, and who now live in the political past but seek to guide the political future.

Mr. Knox's essays appeared in another place before they were collected into this little deceitful volume, and I wonder at the audacity, or the obtuseness, which permitted his cruel mockeries to be flung at the stupidest and timidest public in all

England. It is a wicked, wanton entertainment—as though a Talbot were charging sheep at a tournament, while we in our stalls or galleries laugh at the bewildered, scarce-resentful bleating.

Mr. Agate refers in his new book to a foolish reviewer who pleaded that if there must be essays, they should be about something—something real, forgotten or unknown. Nearly everywhere in his new volume he is writing about something real—horses, tennis, rogues ; or about something forgotten—Emma Jane Worboise ; but scarce anywhere about something he has never known ; for to a man who has known so much and enjoyed so much there is no difficulty in writing about something real and unforgotten. He has little need of invention for his memory is rich and ready, and all that he says is said with a zest which I should call inimitable but for the fact that Hazlitt showed it even more abundantly. Mr. Agate (like Mr. Lynd) freely reminds you of Hazlitt, and has the same careless and candid sense of his own personality. He is a true essayist of the finer type, inasmuch as the luckiest of his extremely definite, his extravagantly effective subjects, is always himself and almost always himself happy ; and especially happy in that he can write, in an acute essay “ More Advice to the Players,”—“ The fact that the new scenery is beautiful instead of hideous, only makes the matter worse. *You can shut your eyes to ugliness more easily than to beauty.*” In the phrase I have italicised Mr. Agate is showing the chief character of his attractiveness—his capacity for enjoyment—no mean or common gift. Another essay displays his concern with making the bad better. Denouncing the Olympian indifference of a colleague or rival, he declares that “ earnestness, if not solemnity, is needed to-day more than ever. The theatre cries out for vigorous denunciation and a blow for the good, on those rare occasions when we find it.”

The third and final series of Mr. Havelock Ellis's *Impressions and Comments* lacks something of the amenity of the earlier series and so, to speak frankly, is less pleasant than it might have been. Mr. Ellis's is recognised, of course, as a distinguished mind, and his new essays present him as rather consciously distinguished from the wandering, blundering, blind masses in which, more or less happily, we are all confused. I am a little uncomfortable in the presence of such distinction : I come to admire, and I listen to reproof. It is healthy, no doubt, to become conscious of one's midgetary insignificance in a world morally astray, but grown men chafe at reproof delivered from a remote Carmel by a chilling voice. Mr. Ellis refers to the hope that the Universal Herd Instinct will embrace all Humanity : “ but our movements towards that end are likely to be exceedingly slow when we realise the state of mind of even our Superior Persons.” The Superior Person on whom this lightning falls is—Mr. Bridges. “ Certainly long before that consummation it would seem likely that we and all the generations of our civilisations will have disappeared in the Pit. Well, it is certainly no more than we deserve. Let us depart smiling. There are others to come.” Bunyan was far more genial.

Sometimes by chastising it Mr. Ellis may show his disdain of the time, but a little, yes, a very little, disdain goes a very long way. “ The world is essentially Absurd ”—well, if we see it so, let us laugh until it is cured ; but did ever rebuke mend an *essential* absurdity ? The absurdity, I presume, results from man's “ fatal power of reproduction ” ; a remnant only, in our author's anticipation, may be saved from the grossness of existence. . . . Dismal enough are the dicta, but I am thankful to find that Mr. Ellis is not all dismal. When he yields to sensuous impressions and un-philosophised memories he writes delightfully and in a prose of simple, individual beauty.

JOHN FREEMAN

BELLES-LETTRES—II

SANDITON. By JANE AUSTEN. Clarendon Press. 7s. 6d.

GETTING A LAUGH. By CHARLES H. GRANDGENT. Harvard University Press. Humphrey Milford. 10s.

A LONDONER'S CALENDAR. By THE OLD STAGER. Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d.

WHAT an extraordinary thing it is that while so many books, and most of them unnecessary, are being written, no one appears to have attempted a competent History of Humour! Humour is one of life's fundamentals. No one admits to being unable to appreciate, few to being unable to emit, it. By your side in underground or cinema Humour sits. Like Sancho Panza Humour attends your most admirable emotions. Like an angel of pity Humour grazes and graces your sorriest prayers. And then its temporal changes are as interesting as any social phenomena; more interesting than costume; scarcely less than coiffure. Why did the Elizabethans think quibbles funny, and the Victorians puns? Why did the Elizabethans laugh at madness and the Victorians at elderly spinsters? Why is Mr. Chaplin to-day the world's most wondrous and best paid clown? Is there no one to answer these questions? He might start with a little monograph on the epigram, and the causes of its contemporary decay, proceed to a critical examination of Marlowe's humour, and gloriously consummate his task with the history we all desiderate.

Unhappily even the persons best fitted for the work get bogged, before they are fairly started, in definition. They discriminate between the witty, the humorous and the ridiculous, while giving an appendix to the nonsensical, and end up about three yards short of where they began. Professor Grandgent, for instance, does something of this kind. He censures Professor Bergson for framing an hypothesis on incomplete evidence. Bergson said that we laughed at a man whose hat was blown off because we were philosophically amused by the idea of a man behaving like a machine. "But," Professor Grandgent argues, "we are sometimes amused at things that bear no resemblance to humanity. We laugh at a bad picture. . . . We grin at a bird that does not look like a bird, unless we are familiar with it; and at a dog that does not look like a dog." Now, that is all nonsense. We do not *in fact* laugh at bad pictures, but sneer at them. Nor does a glimpse of the toucan provoke us to unmeasured mirth. Go to the Zoo, and you will occasionally find very small children trying to conceal their perplexity from their elders beneath a smile, but, speaking generally, the front of the toucan's cage is one of the saddest spots on earth. Obviously all through Professor Grandgent is working on insufficient data. One of the funniest things about the English, Professor Grandgent insinuates, is that they pronounce an "r" like a "w"; thus calling "street" "stweet," and "three" "thwee". Let me assure him that after thirty-one years' intensive study of the English race I have met only one Englishman who did it, and that he was an old music hall comedian, who, in all probability unknowingly, was satirising the affectations of the immediately Post-Crimean dandy, of Dundreary in short. We do not trill, roll or play bat ball against our palettes with our Arrs. But we do not, except on the stage of seventh-rate music halls (vaudevilles) say: "Weally, we are weawy."

But let us get away from abstracts. Here are four jokes which without being overwhelmingly funny seem to me humorous. The first is traditional. A receives by the

morning post a confession from his beloved wife that she has decided, having found better company elsewhere, that she will never return to him, a letter from his friend and partner that the said friend and partner has sailed to South America with all the available funds, a stern reminder from his bank, seventeen bills, and a notice that the Patent Office is unable to register his invention because one exactly similar was registered five days before. A cuts himself, and putting cotton wool on the wound sighs : " Everything goes wrong with me to-day." The second is, more or less, Professor Grandgent's. It details how the parson taking Sunday School related his adventures in a wood—" You all love, I know, as I do, to walk when you have leisure through a great forest under the green boughs "—how the parson looked up at a quaint noise to see a bright fellow, a bright little fellow, with very sharp eyes, and his mouth nibbling at a nut in the little fore paws, a bright little fellow, sweet and brown with a big bushy tail ; what do you think it was, children ?—" I know," says the sharp boy of the class, clicking his fingers ; " please, teacher, God ! " And the third tale is not a tale at all but just a character, the character of Sir Edward, in one of Jane Austen's fragments, who had read more novels than were good for him, and therefore tried to play the Romantically Richardsonian hero-villain with an Austenian heroine. " Miss Haywood, or any other young Woman with any pretensions to Beauty, he was entitled (according to his own views of Society) to approach with high Compliment and Rhapsody on the slightest acquaintance ; but it was Clara alone on whom he had serious designs ; it was Clara whom he meant to seduce.—Her seduction was quite determined on. Her situation in every way called for it." The fourth joke is Charlie Chaplin, in " The Pilgrim," going to the trellis bars of the ticket office and clinging to them, with a convict's despair, for thus strong is habit, while he books his seat.

I defy anyone, even Professor Grandgent, to frame a formula which will explain the humour latent in all these jokes. Meanwhile there is *Sanditon*, latest and probably last of Austenian fragments. The plums of it were made public half a century ago. To-day the thing is given us complete, with all its sketchy punctuation which the amiable proof readers of the period were expected to supplement, and with all its mis-spelling which somebody would surely put right. So uninformed is *Sanditon* that one blushes to obtrude upon it. Here is a woman who always spelt View as Veiw, and who wrote in dots and dashes, with occasional assistance from Capital letters. It is an awful thought that to-day many a publisher's reader would turn down Miss Austen as ignorant of even the first principles of composition. It is no less awful a thought that no one in the last century has surpassed Miss Austen, has struck more keenly or more humorously, at the heart of Incongruous Things.

All the same, Professor Grandgent is very amusing, and the worst of his stories might pass as an after-dinner anecdote. His essays cover a great deal of ground. He ranges far and wide. If there are times when the reader is slightly disgusted by the febrile show of information which Professor Grandgent is so anxious to afford, there are other times when he is glad to bathe in Professor Grandgent's learning. . . . The Old Stager, known to readers of THE LONDON MERCURY by another name, plays about with Life more interestingly. If Thackeray were alive to-day, he might write of Society as does The Old Stager. But Thackeray is dead ; the bitter enthusiasm of the snob died with him ; and, rather pleasantly, the Old Stager goes on.

H. C. HARWOOD

LITERARY HISTORY & CRITICISM

JOHN KEATS : A BIOGRAPHY. By AMY LOWELL. 2 vols. Cape. 42s.

THE LIFE OF JAMES ELROY FLECKER. By GERALDINE HODGSON. Basil Blackwell. 12s. 6d.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE POET SHELLEY. By EDWARD CARPENTER and GEORGE BARNEFIELD. Allen & Unwin. 4s. 6d.

A PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE. By GEORGE H. COWLING. Methuen. 6s.

SHAKING THE DUST FROM SHAKESPEARE. By HARRIS JAY CRISTON. Cosmopolis Press, New York. 2nd Edition.

THE BACKGROUND OF GRAY'S ELEGY. By AMY LOUISE REED. Milford. 12s. 6d.

KEATS, were he in a position to do so, might well demur to the appearance of Miss Lowell's huge book and to the publication of some of his least interesting verse. These defects are set prominently because they indicate a lack of proportion, and explain why we have been given a new biography in two vast volumes, containing half-a-million words, without sufficient critical or other justification for the immense industry spent upon it. The excuse for this book lies elsewhere than in its biographical pretensions. It lies in the fact that Miss Lowell is a collector of every unappropriated fragment concerning the poet, and in presenting us with these fragments from her own and other American collections she cannot resist the temptation of expatiating at great length upon her favourite theme. The result is twelve hundred pages in which the story loses itself in a delta of detail and divagation. The analysis of *Endymion* alone, already familiar, occupies one hundred and fifty pages. Every side issue branches out in the same fashion, and any reader who comes to this volume for his first knowledge of the life of Keats is likely to be bewildered.

At the same time the book has certain merits. Miss Lowell, at the cost of much pains and ingenuity, attempts carefully to date, even to the day, the composition of many of the poems, and the places at which the longer ones were interrupted and continued, so that we do gain a sense of the day-to-day circumstances in which the poet was writing. The poems are thus resolved into the elements of feeling out of which they grew. Abundant space is given to their sources, a sportive search in which ingenuity is easily carried too far. On points of precision Miss Lowell has spent much care, but our positive total gain in understanding and insight from these corrections is not great. It would be pleasant to believe Miss Lowell right in attributing Miss Brawne's famous remark about leaving Keats in oblivion to her desire to protect his reserve in all matters pertaining to his feelings for herself. He had been so secretive that he would scarcely have been likely to approve the publication of his love letters. Posterity has condemned her for apparently not appreciating the privilege of being loved by a man of genius. But genius is a posthumous discovery. The personal relations of two human beings must absorb their immediate concern, and there is nothing strange that two young people with widely different temperaments should fall in love. Fanny Brawne has suffered from the interest that posterity takes in her lover. This is unfair, but justice to her does not involve the attribution to her of qualities that she did not possess. In sum, the new material in the book is not very important and could have been presented briefly. Miss Lowell's researches

have been thorough, but she has declined to be her own critic, preferring to indulge her hobby rather than to write a necessary book.

These "letters and memorials provided by his mother," which Miss Hodgson has conscientiously expanded into a life of Flecker, were very difficult material. They do not well prepare the way for the poet in whom we are now interested. Left as they stand, the curious fact about them is that they hardly suggest a poet's life at all. The record of his short years, until he left the East, is filled with the enthusiasms, problems and hampered endeavours of a would-be educationist and man of action, with poetic interests that seem the by-product, not the main concern, of his mind. His knowledge was precocious; he always seemed the oldest boy of his school, and the oldest undergraduate of his year, but his inner development was slow. Consequently his biographer, knowing the end to which her tale will tend, has, as it were, to supply the imaginative texture, and to supplement by comment the growth of a temperament which left little evidence except occasional verses of its proper self. The facts are indispensable but the book is disappointing, though admittedly the biographer has had a difficult task. The best story in the earlier half characteristically appeals to our imagination by showing Flecker to have gone further than an ordinary prosaic person would have done. It is recorded of him at Uppingham :

We were reading a book (of Pliny's Letters) that had not appeared in any of the series of Keys to the classics, and Flecker not only planned to supply this need, but actually showed us a letter from a publisher, offering him £15 for an English version. He then proceeded to fulfil this plan by taking down the translation in form, as it was rendered by the form-master. The ingenuity that could turn an exceedingly boring subject into hard cash, and could then make one of the staff do the work for him, impressed us with a sense of his capacity that left us breathless and adoring.

As school, Oxford, and then two years at Cambridge went by, and Flecker became an interpreter in Constantinople and Beirut, poetry increasingly gained the upper hand, but it needed the time that it was not granted to subdue the whole of his complex temperament to itself. With *Hassan* he reached maturity. In a detailed appendix Miss Hodgson studies the development of his art and the part that modern French poetry took in its shaping. If only *Hassan* could have been successfully produced as soon as he had finished it! He needed all along to be set free, but when his talent was maturing he was stricken with the disease of which he died. Circumstances were hard on Flecker, but of these circumstances his own slow development was one. His temperament was an alloy; there are signs of an early priggishness, and the pure metal never fully escaped until shortly before his end. Miss Hodgson's record, as I have said, is indispensable, but, overshadowed by the poet who was eventually to emerge, she has strained to find him in the early years where, in truth, the prosaic opposite predominates. To have accepted this contradiction, rather than to have attempted to disguise it, would have made a better book, for the avowal of such puzzles is the life of biography.

Professor Amy Reed's study in the taste for melancholy poetry between 1700 and 1751 is a model of what an academic treatise should be. Learned, scholarly, and written in lucid prose, it does that which it designs to do very well, to leave us inevitably asking if the task would have been contemplated at all were not literary researches expected from professors. A knowledge of the seventeenth century definition of melancholy and of the growth of its expression in English verse until Gray's time does not add to our enjoyment of the Elegy, though it introduces us to many little-studied poets, and makes these pages almost an anthology unified by a common centre of interest. To make the book more than the admirable exercise

which it is, an independent chapter on melancholy was needed, showing, for example, that the hedonist test of life is deceptive since, if the test is to be complete, melancholy must be included among life's pleasures. It may be the pensiveness of Gray or the wormwood of Donne ; even the *danse macabre* is a form of dancing. Burton, with whom the author begins, like Gray, was a don, and both suffered from an excess of the studious quiet that they enjoyed.

Criticism owes more to special pleaders than their exaggerated claims make it easy to allow, and Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Barnefield must have their due for concentrating attention upon one strand in Shelley's temperament for thereby they isolate factors in his character that have not been isolated before. They agree, in fact, that love was Shelley's main interest, and that it was through an unconscious repression in him that he first idealised and then recoiled from the women he loved. Mr. Barnefield refers his famous delusions to this repression, emphasises his loyalty to his men friends, and then argues that, had Shelley known his centre of attraction for what it really was, women would not have entered his life or his affections. The argument and the evidence that accompanies them have their weight, but they are, I think, made to prove too much here. If Shelley is to be considered in sexual terms alone, then I should say that he was bisexual, and constitutionally liable to be carried away by anyone of either sex who happened to absorb him. Patmore, who was an excellent psychologist in this matter, used to enlarge upon the "double-sexed insight of genius," and to remark that genius itself was "that divine third, quickening and creative sex which contains and is the two others."

It is enough at this time of day if a new book on Shakespeare passes the negative test of not misleading the reader on facts nor confusing him with unprovable theories. Mr. Cowling's *Preface* is a convenient guide to Shakespeare's times, to Shakespearean criticism and versification, and to the probable order of his plays. He writes in a lively style and summarises the fruits of the immense literature that has grown around him. I always suspect these books to be read by those who cannot read the plays with complete enjoyment, but can qualify themselves to pass an examination in an art to which they are temperamentally indifferent. That is not the fault of Mr. Cowling, but the better he writes, I fear, the more likely will his readers be to take the poet for granted.

OSBERT BURDETT

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

KING EDWARD VII. By Sir SIDNEY LEE. Macmillan. Volume I. 31s. 6d.

WHEN the Prince of Wales in 1872 was in imminent danger of death, W. H. Russell, the war correspondent who knew him well, wrote: "When all seemed hopeless my great grief was—that the country would never know in general what a good fellow, to use the best phrase about him, he was." All through the thick volume of Sir Sidney Lee the innate *bonhomie* of King Edward keeps breaking in. It survived an educational system which might have been devised by Mr. Fairchild, had that eminent educationalist had the benefit of a Prussian training. Baron Stockmar was hardly a fortunate influence. Not without reason, after a considered estimate of the character of George IV., he came to the conclusion that that monarch was not a desirable example for an heir apparent, and so set to work to prepare elaborate memoranda which were to prevent the young prince following his deplorable example. That the times had changed, and the young prince seemed a quiet and charming child, does not seem to have occurred to the conscientious German. It was a disastrous moment when Lord Melbourne's wise advice was disregarded:

Be not over solicitous about education. It may be able to do much but it does not do as much as is expected from it. It may mould and direct the character, but it rarely alters it.

Cloistered seclusion from a threatening world was the unvarying note.

When he was a boy at Windsor, a few Eton boys (whose parents had passed satisfactorily certain tests of character and position) were allowed to pay the Prince brief and occasional visits, but Prince Albert, who had a singular fear of the contaminating effects of ordinary English youth, was always present. Yet as a boy he managed in spite of all to make many friends he kept for life. Colonel Bruce, his governor, austere even for a Scotsman, carried out to the letter his instructions: "To regulate all the Prince's movements, the distribution and employment of his time, and the occupations and details of his daily life," also to ensure "habits of reflection and self denial." To the Prince Consort, "the only use of Oxford is that it is a place for study." That his son should meet other young men and make "his selection of acquaintances when so thrown together with them" filled him with apprehension; so although belonging to Christ Church nominally, he led a sequestered existence at Frewin Hall, the victim of an oppressive curriculum—smoking was strictly forbidden and games were discouraged, and even what the Prince Consort oddly described as "convivial meetings at dinner" were arranged by the indefatigable colonel, who was careful to direct the conversation "to subjects literary and academic"—and if there was any sign of chafing against the iron routine the Prince Consort would always hasten with parental solicitude from Windsor. Yet when Bruce died the Prince wrote of him with real affection, and although he undoubtedly stood in awe of his father his regard and affection for him were sincere, and at Oxford he managed to add to his increasing number of friends.

The truth was his was a sociable nature. Solitude was distasteful, and with an affectionate disposition he combined the power of inspiring affection in others; and he had the rarer gift of loyalty to those of whom he was fond. When he wrote to Lord Granville:

I may have, and have, many faults—no one is more alive to them than I am, but I have held one great principle in life from which I will never waver, and that is loyalty to one's friends and defending them if possible when they get into trouble.

It was no idle claim—even though one “ gets into scrapes in consequence.” At times he was almost indiscreet in trying to further the fortunes of his friends, but he never forgot them in adversity. Sir Bartle Frere at the time of his recall had no warmer champion. His chivalrous kindness to Napoleon III and the Empress after the crash had to be restrained by the prudent considerations of political necessity. Colonel Valentine Baker he tried in vain to get restored to his rank in the English army when he had purged his offence by admirable work in Egypt. As far as was humanly possible he stood by Dilke ; and the fact that he was involved in the unfortunate baccarat scandal was largely due to an attempt, generous if ill-advised, to save a friend from public disgrace. In spite of political differences and the invincible prejudice of Queen Victoria he always maintained his friendship and respect for Mr. Gladstone ; but one hopes Sir Sidney Lee is wrong when he writes in his account of the funeral : “ The marked attention which the Prince paid the memory of the old Liberal leader caused some resentment among rigid party men on the Conservative side ”—nor does the apology seem needful—“ who were unmindful of the ancient links.”

Unfortunately the repressive system of the Prince Consort lived after him. Queen Victoria seemed reluctant to realise that the Prince had grown up ; not merely was she opposed, in spite of the protests of her ministers, to allowing him to participate in affairs of State, but she maintained an almost ludicrous surveillance over his personal movements. When, a married man with three children, he visited the continent with the Princess of Wales, the conditions were imposed

that a strict incognito should be observed, that a rigorous eye should be kept on expenses, that invitations should be accepted only from the Courts of near relations, and that Sundays were to be devoted to rest and not to amusement.

When at the age of thirty-three he went to India, the Queen claimed the right to regulate every detail of the programme very often without consulting his wishes, and impressed upon him “ due observance of Sundays and the desirability of going to bed at 10 o'clock.” Disquieting rumours reached home of practical jokes on the voyage, perhaps occasioned by the presence of Lord Charles Beresford on board, which had to be set at rest by the tactful correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere.

A grim story illustrates the difficulties of Indian administration. The Prince, who had been a guest of Sir Jung Bahadur, heard to his horror that his host's daughter proposed to commit suttee. His influence saved her ; but in the end Sir Jung died in more than suspicious circumstances, and three of his wives wrote to the Prince to express their determination to commit the usual sacrifice. On the day after her husband's death, the chief of them addressed to the Prince a pathetic letter, informing him of her fatal resolve, and she and the other two wives were cremated on the funeral pyre. One of the most salutary results of the visit, due entirely to his personal initiative, was an improvement in the treatment of the natives. He writes to the Queen :

What struck me most forcibly was the rude and rough manner in which the English “ political officers ” (as they are called who are in attendance on the native chiefs) treat them. It is much to be deplored and the system is, I am sure, quite wrong.

and again to Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India, he complains of “ the disgraceful habit of officers in the Queen's service speaking of the inhabitants of India, many of them sprung from great races, as ‘ niggers ’.” In consequence of the Prince's

representations stringent instructions were sent to the Government of India, and at least one Resident was recalled "in consequence of his offensive behaviour to the Princes and people."

Nothing in these pages shows the Prince's political wisdom more than his attitude towards Ireland. The disloyalty of Ireland, while a provincial tradition, was not discouraged by the fact that during two centuries the Sovereign had only passed twenty-five days in Ireland. The Prince was in favour of a Royal residence in the country, and was even prepared to act as supreme Governor of Ireland. Disraeli pointed out to the Queen that a suitable residence for the Prince in an Irish hunting county would "combine the fulfilment of public duties with pastime, a combination which befits a princely life," but to the Queen "it was not to be thought of"—indeed "quite out of the question" and "never to be conceded." The only thing in favour of the suggestion was that "it would get the Prince out of London during the Season." Whether the plan would have been as successful as a long succession of ministers, including Mr. Gladstone, hoped will never be known; that it was worth trying can hardly be questioned.

The long story of King Edward's influence in European affairs is well told. His relations with the Kaiser disclose an interesting and conclusive picture of forbearance on the one hand and intolerable ill manners and chicanery on the other.

Sir Sidney Lee has given us an interesting volume and maintains a nice balance between candour and discretion. Even a biographer cannot bandy words with his Sovereign. It is a pity he departs from the sound rule of chronological order. Dealing as he does with various phases of King Edward's life in distinct compartments the sense of historical continuity is lost, and an inevitable confusion of dates and occasions arises. There are also some odd lapses. The King's interest in yachting is ascribed to his seeing as a child the famous race for the America Cup "run" at Cowes. To say of the great Duke of Wellington: "Despite his incursions into party politics the Duke retained to the last the veneration due to a national hero" is curiously inept. There was nothing even "Irishly paradoxical" in the Fenians blowing up Clerkenwell Prison in which their friends were imprisoned. Their object was an obvious attempt to enable them to escape. Garibaldi did not "at the head of an improvised army of a thousand Italian patriots rid Italy of the last of its petty tyrants," but perhaps Sicily is meant; and whatever may be said against Bismarck he was not in favour of an attack on France in 1875. On the contrary, by private representation to the Tsar of Russia, he prevented it. Still, an attractive and convincing picture in it emerges of a great personality, who justified, if Germany be excepted, Professor Jebb's prophecy of him as a young man that "he has the chance if he knows how to use it of becoming the most popular man in Europe."

CHARTRES BIRON

NATURAL HISTORY

BROADLAND BIRDS. By E. L. TURNER. Country Life. 15s.

SECRETS OF BIRD LIFE. By H. A. GILBERT and ARTHUR BROOK. Arrow-smith. 10s.

THE BIRD AS A DIVER. By J. M. DEWAR. Witherby. 10s. 6d.

BIRDS OF EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA. By WARDLAW RAMSAY. Gurney and Jackson. 12s. 6d.

THE MORPHOLOGY AND EVOLUTION OF THE APES AND MAN. By CHARLES F. SONNTAG. Bale and Danielson. 12s. 6d.

BIG GAME AND PYGMIES. By CUTHBERT CHRISTY. Macmillan. 21s.

MISS TURNER has condensed some twenty-five years' observations into a photographic record of bird life which is by no means confined, as the title might seem to suggest, to species mainly associated with the Broadlands. It is to be regretted that she did not succumb to previous importunities of her friends and make her work accessible to the general public sooner. Her photography would not then have suffered unduly by comparison with that of her present contemporaries; and she would have avoided details of the bird photographer's stratagems and paraphernalia, which have been published so often as to have become common knowledge. Apart, however, from these defects, and an occasional lapse into sentimentality—no all-round naturalist would agree with her pronouncement that birds are "the most elusive of all the beautiful living things that make life a joy"—the book is a very good one. The fact that the writer was the first in this country to welcome the return of the breeding bittern with a camera instead of a gun will always appeal to those who make a fetish of rarity; while she was probably one of the first, if not actually the first, to photograph the bearded tit, the water-rail and the grasshopper warbler.

Among the many popular bird books which have reached me a very special place must be accorded to Messrs. Gilbert and Brook's *Secrets of Bird Life*. The letter-press has a distinctive note of its own—the rare one of spontaneous gaiety—while some of the illustrations are not only excellent but sensational. For these "Brook," as he is continually referred to in the text, appears to be solely responsible, the function of "Gilbert," and other friends, being to cover "Brook" up, and abandon him. The only defect in some of "Brook's" photographs is that they have been so cut down as to over-emphasise the main object, *i.e.*, the bird. This not only detracts from their zoological value, but is also artistically unpardonable. The collaborators have evidently entered *con amore* into the task of photographing subjects, which, by reason either of their local restriction or of their shyness, have been only occasionally, and seldom successfully, tackled by their predecessors. One may instance such species as the green-shank, the crested tit, the three wood-peckers and the carrion crow. With easier subjects, such as the king-fisher and the capercaillie, they have cheerfully elected the paths of greatest resistance. An extraordinary photograph of a king-fisher in flight, with a fish in its beak, shows the tips of the wing feathers in a well-defined lemniscus reminding one of the flight-mechanism of insects. But the difficulties are laughed at, and the gaiety of the text, to which we have already referred,

rings true, and is accompanied by a robust common-sense. Take these cameos for example : "That bird was doing the only good thing I have ever seen a Common Gull do. It was sucking one of its own eggs "; or, referring to the male oyster-catcher, "He always looks worried and harassed whether he has a nest or not."

To turn from gay to grave, Dr. Dewar's *The Bird as a Diver* and the late Colonel Wardlaw Ramsay's *Birds of Europe and North Africa* are both recent publications of exceptional value, the latter being a *multum in parvo* tabular guide, following Hartert in the general systematic arrangement, though not exclusively in the nomenclature, and dealing with measurements of both sexes, coloration of adults and young, seasonal distribution, nesting sites, egg marking and so forth, with great directness and clarity.

In *The Bird as a Diver* Dr. Dewar has attacked some very difficult but fascinating problems with a meticulous prevision against sources of error. His conclusions, based on evidence afforded by the records of five thousand dives of ducks, grebes, cormorants, divers, auks and the coot—the latter having distinct idiosyncrasies of its own—may be summarised as follows. Firstly, that depth is the principal factor in determining the duration of the dive : secondly, that the average speed of the submerged diving bird is between one and two feet a second : thirdly, that the pause which follows each dive is partly determined by the depth of water. He arrives at the further interesting conclusion that diving birds usually eat their food under water, only dealing with their prey on the surface when it is unmanageable otherwise. No instance has come under Dr. Dewar's notice of either a pelagic or a bottom fish being brought to the surface after an abnormally prolonged dive.

The penetration of sunlight into water has an interesting bearing on the subject, since sunlight is totally reflected from the surface of water if the sun is not more than an hour above the horizon. The depth of penetration of refracted sunlight has not as yet been worked out. Probably photography could be successfully applied to this portion of the investigation, as well as to confirming or supplementing Dr. Dewar's methods of range finding.

The notes on the habits of apes at large in Dr. Sonntag's *The Morphology and Evolution of the Apes and Man* will probably soon be obsolete, if indeed they are not obsolete already ; but this is an insignificant blemish in a masterly compendium of what is at present known of the comparative anatomy of the primates. Though anthropology is not as yet an essential branch of a liberal education, its importance in human affairs is winning recognition, and the conviction is gaining ground that the problems of human disease, and incidentally many of the problems of human crime, can only be satisfactorily solved by experimentation, either on humanity itself, or on the lower orders. If the latter alternative is chosen as the less repugnant, the investigator's knowledge of anthropoid anatomy must needs be exhaustive, for certain scourges of humanity, one may instance measles and influenza, can only be induced and investigated in mammals whose bloods have so much in common with our own that they may be literally and exactly described as our blood-relations. Such species occur among the most highly organised primates, and among them alone : nor, so far as the African representatives, the chimpanzis and gorillas, are concerned, would there appear to be any disturbing shortage of material. Only isolated portions of the great African forest belt have as yet been explored by Europeans, and it would appear from the most recent information that the gorilla is a comparatively common animal in such fastnesses as suit him, and by no means confined in diminishing numbers to the crater-lands of Kivu. Whether it would be practicable to "farm" gorillas for research purposes, as is the case with chimpanzis on an island branch of the Pasteur

Institute in French Guinea, is a question that cannot be satisfactorily determined until more is known of their true character ; but it is to be hoped that the fashion of regarding species so closely allied to ourselves as " big game " will be condemned by public opinion. The similarity of the title of Dr. Christy's book *Big Game and Pygmies* to that of Prince William of Sweden's *Among Pygmies and Gorillas*, and a cursory glance at its pictures, leads one to commence reading it with some misgiving, but one has not far to go before one becomes agreeably aware that Dr. Christy writes as a naturalist—he has had twenty-five years' experience of tropical Africa—rather than as a big game hunter. As he puts it himself, every beast that has fallen to his rifle " has been required for museum purposes, or as food for my camp, or in the case of elephants, for the sake of the ivory." Few naturalists will envy him the distinction of having been the first European to shoot an okapi ; but many will envy him the distinction of having been the first to observe its habits at large, and of having been sufficiently well trained in biology to be able to turn those observations to account. His book is mainly concerned with the " forest " as opposed to the " bush " fauna of tropical Africa, and he advances and supports the very interesting generalisation that the small red buffalo, the okapi, the forest elephant and the pygmy man, all of them restricted in range to what remains of the great trans-continental forest belt, are original and primitive stocks, possibly stunted by a sunless environment, whose outside equivalents are the large black buffalo, the giraffe, the bush elephant, and the negroes of the forest margin. Dr. Christy has much first-hand information to give us on the elephants and buffaloes, suggesting a new classification for each group ; but even greater zoological interest attaches to his chapters on the aardvarks and ant-eaters, on the smaller mammals, including pygmy squirrels, two to three inches long, and some especially weird shrews ; on the birds, reptiles, fishes, and insects. Two chapters on skinning and preserving, and on forest hunting and armament, complete a book which is quite out of the common and has been thoroughly well done.

DOUGLAS ENGLISH